

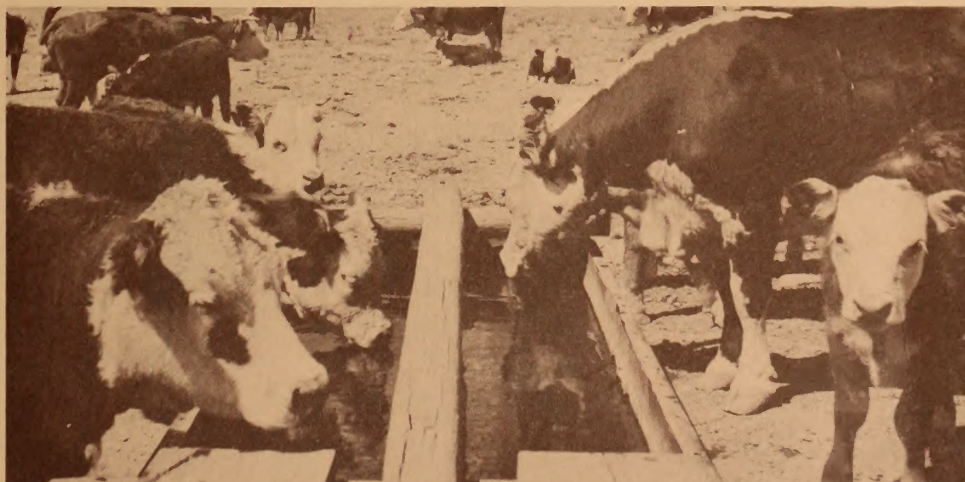
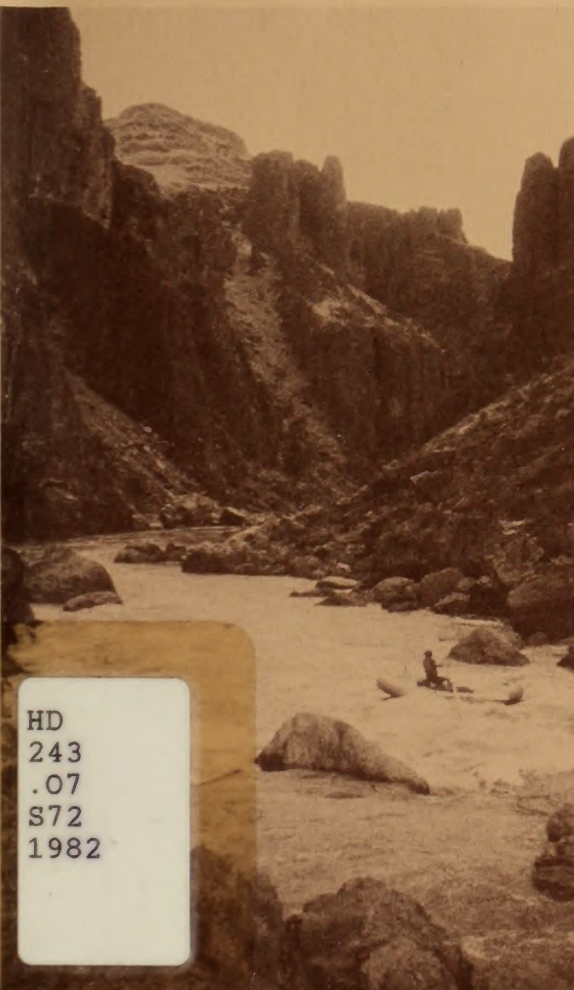
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
Bureau of Land Management

Vale District Office  
175 A. Street  
P.O. Box 700  
Vale, Oregon 97918

# Summary of Proposed Land Use Alternatives

## Southern and Northern Malheur Resource Areas

### Vale District





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# United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Vale District Office  
175 A Street W  
P.O. Box 700  
Vale, Oregon 97918

September 10, 1982

## INTRODUCTION

This brochure has been prepared to summarize identified land use alternatives and other information concerning the land use planning process in the Southern and Northern Malheur Resource Areas. The land use plan, scheduled for completion in 1983, will guide the resource management programs on the public lands for about the next decade unless other major issues arise.

Public involvement is an essential step in the development of a land use plan for the regions varied resources. To date, public involvement, both formal and informal, has played an active role in guiding the Vale District in the formulation of relevant issues and planning criteria.

This brochure provides an opportunity for citizens, organizations and agencies to learn about resource management and land use planning. It also provides for the submission of written comments and gives notification of scheduled meetings.

The BLM is seeking viewpoints on the four land use alternatives presented in this brochure and on scoping of the Grazing Management Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Southern Malheur EIS area. Comments on the land use plan may be directed towards an entire alternative or any individual part thereof. You may also comment if you feel no action is the preferred alternative. No action would continue management and allocation of resources at present levels. The preferred alternative will be developed based on public and staff comments. Comments may be sent directly to the Vale District Office, or presented in person at one of the scheduled land use planning and grazing EIS scoping meetings, which will be held in McDermitt, (NV), Jordan Valley, Vale and Portland, Oregon.

## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES - SCOPING MEETINGS

1. Date: Monday, September 27, 1982 - McDermitt, Nevada  
Place: Community Center  
Time: 7:30 p.m. PST
2. Date: Tuesday, September 28, 1982 - Jordan Valley, Oregon  
Place: Lion's Den  
Time: 7:30 p.m. MT
3. Date: Wednesday, September 29, 1982 - Vale, Oregon  
Place: Red Rock Center  
Time: 7:30 p.m. MT
4. Date: Tuesday, October 5, 1982 - Portland, Oregon Place:  
Place: Bonneville Auditorium, 1002 N.E. Holliday  
Time: 7:30 p.m. PST

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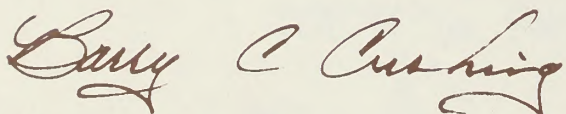


The public comment period will close on October 18, 1982. The preferred alternative, and other alternatives including "No Action" to be addressed in the Southern Malheur Grazing EIS, will be announced this winter. The draft EIS should be available for public review and comment in the Spring of 1983. The final EIS should be released in September 1983. The decision document on grazing management will be developed by Summer 1984.

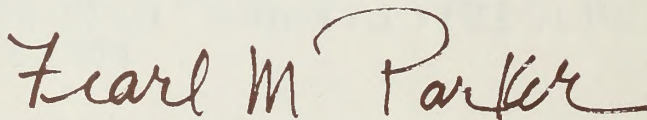
The wilderness element of the preferred alternative will be incorporated in one of the alternatives in the statewide (BLM) wilderness EIS. This EIS will analyze 87 wilderness study areas in six BLM districts in Oregon. The EIS will be scoped in the spring of 1983 and completed in 1984.

We have provided a review comment form for your use in this brochure. We are most interested in your comments on:

1. The factors or criteria to be used in the selection of a preferred land use alternative.
2. Your preference for elements which should be in the preferred alternative.
3. Your ideas about other alternatives which should be addressed in the grazing management EIS.
4. Your ideas on issues which should be addressed in the grazing EIS.



Northern Malheur Resource Area Manager



District Manager



Southern Malheur Resource Area Manager



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# PLANNING UNITS

The Vale District encompasses 5.1 million acres of public lands, and is divided into three resource areas: Northern Malheur, Southern Malheur and Baker. The Northern Malheur Resource area contains 1.9 million acres of which 0.6 million acres (north half) lies north of Highway 20 in Malheur County. The grazing program for this area was analyzed in the Ironsides Grazing Environmental Impact Statement, and decisions for these areas were published in Rangeland Program Summaries in January, 1982. The remainder of the Northern Malheur Resource Area (south half) contains 1.3 million acres and lies between Highway 20 and a line between Jordan Valley, Cow Lakes, and Crowley Creek in Malheur County. The Management Framework Plan (MFP) was completed for this Resource Area in 1979 and is being amended in this planning effort to consider wilderness in both parts of the Resource Area, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC's) and additional livestock forage data in the south half of the Resource Area. The Southern Malheur Resource

Area contains 2.6 million acres and extends south to the Oregon/Nevada line in Malheur County. The Southern Malheur Resource Area and the south half of Northern Resource Area comprise the Southern Malheur EIS area (hereafter referred to as the Southern Malheur Planning Area) on which a grazing environmental impact statement will be written following completion of this planning effort.

Approximately 219,900 acres in the Burns District and 13,200 acres in the Winnemucca, Nevada District will be involved in the wilderness aspects of this planning effort.

The general location and land ownership status are depicted on Map 1 and Table 1, respectively.

The major resource management program activities are: range, wilderness, wildlife, recreation, wild horses, lands, watershed, minerals, cultural and botanical resources. The ensuing discussions and resource allocations apply to the Southern Malheur Planning Area, except Wilderness which is applicable to both portions of the Northern Malheur Resource Area as well as the Southern Malheur Resource Area.

Table 1

	S. Malheur RA	Pct Total	South Half N. Malheur RA	Pct Total	S. Malheur ES Area	Pct Total	North Half No. Malheur RA	Pct Total	Both Resource Areas	Pct Total
<b>Bureau of Land Management</b>	2,655,927 <sup>1</sup>	80.1	1,263,275 <sup>2</sup>	86.9	3,919,202	82.5	619,000	31.1	4,538,202	67.2
<b>Other Federal</b>	86,622	2.6	40,297	2.8	126,919	2.5	7,599	0.4	134,518	1.9
<b>Private</b>	371,068	11.2	113,039	7.7	484,107	10.1	1,292,141	3.5	1,776,248	26.3
<b>State</b>	201,176	6.1	37,419	2.6	238,595	4.9	68,987	65.0	307,582	4.6
<b>TOTAL</b>	3,314,793	100.0	1,454,030	100.0	4,768,823	100.0	1,987,727	100.0	6,756,550	100.0

<sup>1</sup> Does not include 38,448 acres (28,540 ac. Federal (BLM), 824 ac. Pvt., and 9,084 ac, State) in the Whitehorse Allotment #1008(OR)/#500(ID) administered by the Boise, Idaho District, BLM.

<sup>2</sup> Does not include 4,099 acres (4059 ac. Federal (BLM) and 40 ac. Pvt.) in the Brown Allotment administered by the Boise, Idaho District, BLM.



# MAP 1 Vale District Grazing Management EIS Areas





# PLANNING PROCESS

BLM's land use planning system is a dynamic process which provides for multiple use management of the public lands to best serve the public interest.

BLM resource specialists in range, forestry, wildlife, fisheries, wilderness, lands and minerals, recreation, soil conservation, cultural and botanical resources, and economics, have contributed to the land use planning process since 1977.

Following is an outline of the three major phases of the planning process: 1) the land use plan, 2) the Environmental Impact Statement and 3) the decisions.

## 1) Land Use Plan Phase

### Identification of Issues

Among the basic principles of the Bureau's land use planning process is its commitment to citizen involvement and interagency coordination in the formation of a land use plan. The BLM has sought this involvement through numerous individual contacts, resource area tours, publications, news articles and meetings. There has also been intra-agency consistency incorporated into the planning process through consultation with adjacent BLM Districts and State Office personnel. From both formal and informal contacts, the major land use and resource management issues were derived which would focus and direct development of the land use plan.

### Data Collection and Analysis

Inventories conducted by BLM staff and others have provided information on resource quality, quantity, use and problems. Data have been collected on resource outputs, number of jobs, levels of income, and public revenue generated. Peoples' attitudes and opinions about BLM resources and management procedures have been compiled. This information has been analyzed and recorded on overlays, maps, tables, and in narrative descriptions in a number of documents, including the Unit Resource Analysis (URA), Planning Area Analysis (PAA) and the Resource Industry Analysis, which is part of the PAA.

### Development of the Management Recommendations

Using the above analyses, resource specialists have developed management recommendations for their particular resource. These recommendations were formed with a "blinders-on" approach. The resource specialist disregarded the constraints other programs would place on that resource, and recommended the best resource program technically feasible.

Recommendations include land use allocations, which indicate specific locations where certain management practices should occur to accomplish the program objective. These recommendations have been included as Step 1 of the Management Framework Plan (MFP).

### Development of Planning Criteria

Planning criteria are rules or guidelines which provide:

BLM planners and managers guidance for tailoring issues and concerns previously identified into a range of possible land use allocations and management alternatives. This ensures that unnecessary data collection and analyses are avoided.

A basis for all participants to understand, discuss and contribute to the planning process.

A basis for the District Manager to select a preferred alternative.

Draft planning criteria were distributed for public review in January 1981. Through additional refinement and analysis, the criteria have been revised to reflect public comments and concerns.

### Development of Land Use Plan Alternatives and Associated Materials

This is the current step in the planning process. Land use alternatives have been prepared according to the revised planning criteria and are summarized in this brochure (Table 2). Public review, in the form of public meetings and written comments plus additional internal review, are factors to be used in the selection of a preferred alternative. Overlay maps have been prepared to display potential land use allocations for each alternative. These can be reviewed at the Vale District Office and at the scheduled public meetings.

### Development of a Preferred Alternative

In response to public and internal review comments, the District Manager will complete the identification of a preferred alternative and present it to the State Director for review. The preferred alternative may be different from, or contain characteristics of, any one of the alternatives summarized in this brochure.



## **2) Grazing Environmental Impact Statement Phase**

The Southern Malheur Grazing Management Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be started in the fall of 1982. EIS scoping will be completed in conjunction with discussions on MFP alternatives in public meetings. This will allow the public to participate in designing a short, concise EIS document which addresses real issues and relevant alternatives relating to resource management practices.

During spring and summer 1983, draft and final EIS documents will be prepared.

The draft EIS describes anticipated environmental impacts and consequences of the proposed action and alternatives. Upon completion, it will be released for public comment.

The final EIS responds to public comments on the adequacy of the draft EIS and makes necessary adjustments for accuracy, depth and scope of impact assessment. It may include additional alternatives which develop from the review of the draft EIS. The final EIS, like the land use alternatives, is a tool of analysis, not a decision document.

## **3) Decision Phase**

### **Development of Program Decision Document**

During 1984, the District Manager will identify his decision, present the rationale for the decision and distribute copies to the public. The decision process involves reviewing each EIS alternative, and the benefits and costs of favoring one activity or resource over another. The District Manager will also review comments received on the final grazing EIS and will forward a summary of these along with the decision document to the State Director for his review and concurrence. If further information, analysis or allotment management plans indicate changes are required in the decision, an update document will be published.

### **Wilderness Environmental Impact Statement Phase**

The wilderness environmental impact statement process is described in a special section immediately following Table 2, Goals and Objectives of Land Use Alternatives.

## **PLANNING ISSUES**

The major issues which helped direct the formation of land use plan alternatives for the planning area are summarized below.

### **Social and Economic Impacts**

Allocations of BLM-administered lands for forage production, recreation use, wildlife habitat, minerals development and other resource demands influence the income and lifestyles of Malheur and Harney County communities. The Grazing EIS and Wilderness EIS will analyze and display the economic costs and benefits of the preferred and other alternatives.

### **Range**

Allocation of forage production is important to meet the needs of wildlife, livestock and wild horses, while maintaining or improving range condition, especially along riparian areas. The numbers and types of range improvements needed is an important issue.

### **Wilderness**

The amount and type of area to be preserved and managed for wilderness values is an important issue. The conflicts of wilderness designation with other uses, such as livestock management practices, mineral and energy activities and motorized recreation need to be considered.

### **Wildlife**

The wildlife species of Eastern Oregon range and forest lands are dependent on a wide variety of habitat types, ranging from those dominated by grass to those dominated by shrubs. Big game winter range habitat is of special concern due to the large numbers of animals which occupy the Resource Area during this critical period of the year. Vegetative manipulation (e.g., seedings, brush control, etc.), livestock grazing and other activities create habitat for some species while reducing habitat for others.

### **Recreation**

There is interest and concern for the types of recreational uses that will be permitted on public lands, and the kinds of facilities that should be developed to accommodate forecasted demand. Interests include: environmental education, hunting, fishing, camping, off-road vehicle use and float boating.



## Mineral and Energy Resources

In light of present and future demands for minerals and energy, it is anticipated that mining and exploration activities will continue to increase. The need for permits, claims and leases will reflect this accelerated demand.

### Lands

There are numerous requests from persons or groups for special use permits and privileges or land allocations for a single use (e.g., requests for rights-of-way, utility corridors, cooperative agreements, etc.).

### Fire Management

Fire has long been a part of the natural ecology of Eastern Oregon. The role fire plays in range management will continue to gain more interest due to the low cost. Conflicts with fire suppression in relation to resource values threatened will remain a sensitive subject.

### Legal Requirements for Resource Protection

Various laws and regulations provide for certain land use allocations and management practices. These management practices may be implemented at any time without the completion of the planning process. Examples of these legal requirements include:

1. Meet the requirements of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act in regards to range, resource planning, wilderness, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, and visual resource management.
2. Protect known or suspected habitat of Federal and State-listed threatened, endangered and sensitive plants and animals.
3. Protect cultural resources in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.
4. Protect soils to ensure sustained yield of renewable resources.
5. Protect air and water quality in accordance with Federal and State laws.
6. Process mineral leases, and exploration and development authorizations.

## LAND USE ALTERNATIVES OVERVIEW

Several land use alternatives have been developed to provide the District with an analytical tool to use in selecting or constructing a preferred alternative. These alternatives combine recommendations for individual resource programs and provide a range of resource management goals. The objectives of each goal describe management targets for each resource. These objectives are prioritized to reflect their significance in meeting the overall goal of each alternative. The first objective must be satisfied before the next objective is considered. For example, if range is listed before wildlife, all range management activities must be considered before any wildlife management activity. In this case, any direct conflicts between range and wildlife would be settled in favor of range.

### Minimum Allocations and Management Practices

All land use alternatives will comply with Federal laws, Executive Orders, regulations and policies relating to land use and resource management. The application of these laws automatically determines some land use allocation and management practices. Those laws which are most significant to BLM activities are available at the Vale District Office.

### Scope of Alternatives

The alternatives range from one which emphasizes production of commodity resources and enhancement of local economic benefits to one which emphasizes protection of natural and cultural resource values. Within this range two mid-ground alternatives are presented. The four alternatives are shown in Table 2.



Table 2

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF LAND USE ALTERNATIVES

**NOTE:** All goals and objectives must meet legal requirements

### Alternative A

**Goal:** Emphasize maximum development and production of commodity resources and the enhancement for local economic benefits.

**Objectives:**

(1) Allow unlimited mineral exploration, development and extraction from the public land.

(2) Provide land for rights-of-way, utility and transportation corridors, and other needs for community, private, industrial, or commercial developments.

(3) Maintain and improve the vegetation resource to maximize benefits to livestock. Develop, implement and maintain Allotment Management Plans (AMPs) to achieve maximum stocking levels. Where needed, improve or provide for additional range improvement including but not limited to vegetative change, water for livestock developments and fencing. Continue livestock grazing in all suitable ranges.

(4) Emphasize the production of wildlife habitat for game animals.

(5) Maintain or improve water quality in high value sport fishery streams where water quality problems limit fisheries habitat. Allow restricted grazing in closed (fenced) riparian zones.

(6) Keep public lands and roads open for a variety of recreation activities. Construct recreation facilities to enhance visitor satisfaction when direct local benefits are evident.

(7) Reduce wild horse numbers from current planned levels to minimum levels necessary to maintain viable herds.

(8) Provide special visual resource management only where not in conflict with community production or services.

(9) Recommend no special management area (i.e., ACEC or other) designation for scientific or educational values.

(10) Recommend no wilderness designation for the public land.

### Alternative B

**Goal:** Emphasize the production of commodity resources while accommodating natural and cultural values.

**Objectives:**

(1) Allow mineral exploration, development and extraction.

(2) As necessary, provide land for rights-of-way, utility and transportation corridors, and other needs for community, private, industrial or commercial development.

(3) Maintain and improve the vegetation resource for the principle benefit of livestock and wildlife. Develop, implement and maintain Allotment Management Plans (AMPs) to satisfy livestock forage needs. Allocate any surplus forage to livestock and big game. Where needed, improve or provide for additional range improvements, including but not limited to vegetation change, water for livestock, and fencing.

(4) Develop and maintain a diversity of wildlife habitat to provide for the production of game animals. Control livestock grazing in riparian zones of major perennial streams, and exclude grazing in closed (fenced) riparian zones.

(5) Improve water quality in streams with a major sport fishery where water quality problems limit fisheries habitat.

(6) Provide for a variety of developed outdoor recreation opportunities keeping public land and roads open for most recreation activities.

(7) Maintain viable wild horse herds of levels commensurate with available forage after allocations are made to livestock, wildlife, and watershed.

(8) Protect and enhance the quality of scenery in high sensitive areas along the selected major travel routes.

(9) Recommend designation of manageable wilderness study areas after resolving conflicts in favor of commodity resources.

(10) Recommend designation of special management areas (i.e., ACEC or other) for scientific or educational values not in conflict with the production of commodity resources.



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## Alternative C

**Goal:** Emphasize the protection or enhancement of natural and cultural value while accomodating the development and production of commodity resources.

**Objectives:**

- (1) Develop and maintain a diversity of wildlife habitat types for a variety of game and non-game species. Control livestock grazing in perennial streams and exclude livestock grazing in closed (fenced) riparian zones.
- (2) Provide for a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities, including developed sites, dispersed recreation, off-road vehicle areas, and limited access areas.
- (3) Improve water quality in all streams with a fishery where water quality problems limit fisheries habitat.
- (4) Maintain viable wild horse herds levels commensurate with available forage after allocations are made to watershed and big game.
- (5) Recommend wilderness designation of manageable wilderness study areas resolving major conflicts in favor of protecting natural and cultural values.
- (6) Recommend designation of special management area (i.e., ACED or other) for the protection and interpretation of outstanding scientific and educational values.
- (7) Develop, implement, and maintain Allotment Management Plan (AMPs) to satisfy wildlife, watershed, wild horses, and livestock forage needs, allocating surplus forage to wildlife, watershed and wild horses, in that order. Maintain existing range improvements, and where necessary, improve or provide for additional range improvements.
- (8) Protect and enhance the quality of scenery in high sensitive areas along State Highways and major county roads.
- (9) Allow mineral exploration, development, and extraction from the public land.
- (10) Provide land for rights-of-way, utility and transportation corridors, community, private, commercial, and industrial use.

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## Alternative D

**Goal:** Emphasize maximum protection and enhancement of natural and cultural values.

**Objectives:**

- (1) Recommend wilderness designation for all wilderness study areas.
- (2) Recommend designation of special management areas (i.e., ACEC and others) for the protection and interpretation of scientific and educational values.
- (3) Improve and maintain vegetative conditions that will foster the maximum diversity of native plants and animals (species and numbers). Exclude livestock grazing and ORV use in riparian zones of all perennial streams and restrict livestock grazing in all other important riparian zones.
- (4) Protect and enhance the quality of scenery in all areas of high sensitivity not in conflict with other natural values.
- (5) Enhance water quality in all strams with an existing or potential fishery.
- (6) Manage wild horse herds to achieve maximum numbers not in conflict with other natural or cultural values.
- (7) Provide for unconfined recreation opportunities, but limit use of off-road vehicles where in conflict with other natural or cultural values.
- (9) Conduct mineral activities to maintain or enhance natural and cultural values, and protect sensitive areas.
- (10) Conduct lands activites to maintain or enhance natural and cultural values and protect sensitive areas.



# WILDERNESS

This Management Framework Plan (MFP) and a subsequent statewide wilderness Environmental Impact Statement comprise the second step of a three-step wilderness review. The first step was an inventory. During the inventory, all lands were reviewed with respect to the presence of wilderness characteristics. Those areas which were found to have such characteristics were identified as Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs). All other lands were eliminated from further wilderness consideration.

Alternate ways of managing the land in the wilderness study areas are now being considered. After the close of the public comment period for this document, the District Manager will submit a preferred alternative for wilderness to the State Director. The State Director may accept or modify the preferred alternative. Early in 1983, public meetings will be held to scope a draft Wilderness Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) covering the State Director's preferred alternative (and other alternatives) for all study areas in Oregon. The draft EIS will be distributed for public review and comment during the winter of 1983-1984. Public hearings will be held on the draft EIS, and then a final statement will be prepared.

In the third step of the review, the State Director will submit his recommendations to BLM's National Director. Recommendations will be made, in turn, by the Director, Secretary of the Interior, and the President. The President will submit his recommendations to Congress.

This brochure describes alternatives for 36 WSAs comprising about 1,445,500 acres of federal land. Although all or part of 10 of these areas are located outside of the Vale District (see Table 5), this brochure and the public meetings will serve as forums for nine of these WSAs. A portion of the tenth, (WSA OR-030-195) is located in Idaho (WSA ID-16-48b) and was considered by the Boise District in the Owyhee Resource Area MFP, which was made available to the public December 14, 1981.

The four land use allocation alternatives described in this brochure include one involving wilderness designation of all WSAs and one involving no wilderness designation of WSAs. The "all wilderness" and "no wilderness" alternatives were developed to provide an analysis that covered the full range of decision options that are open to Congress.

Until the time that Congress acts on each study area, all WSAs must be managed in accordance with the Bureau's Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review, December 12, 1979 (available from the District and State Offices).

The wilderness studies are being conducted in accordance with the final wilderness study policy, February 3, 1982. This document is available from the Vale District and Oregon BLM State Office.

## AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 provide that designation of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) be given priority in the development of land use plans. The Act defines these as:

"places within the public lands where special management attention is needed (when such areas are developed or where no development is required) to protect and prevent irreparable damage to important historical, cultural, or scenic values, fish and wildlife resources or other natural systems or processes, or to protect life and safety from natural hazards."

Nominations for ACECs in the area were requested from the public and the District's resource specialists. Only one nomination was received from the public. Eighteen nominations, none overlapping in area, were received from various BLM resource specialists. These nominations were evaluated by an interdisciplinary team to assess their compliance with established criteria. Nominations which met the established criteria have been classified as "potential" ACECs. Six potential ACECs have been identified.

The six potential ACECs are considered under the goals and objectives of each alternative. They are accepted in Alternatives B, C and D. In Alternative B, the potential ACECs are accepted but the management plans must allow resource production consistent with the criteria.

The preferred alternative will identify which of the potential ACECs will be recommended for designation. The designation process involves a decision that will:

Consider present and potential uses of the public land area in question;

Address the relative scarcity of the values involved;

Consider alternatives that include management options that will allocate the resources to the combination of uses that best serve the public interest;

Weigh long-term benefits to the public against short-term benefits;

Consider public views and concerns.



# RANGELAND PROGRAM

The range program provides for the improvement and maintenance of rangeland condition in the Planning Area. The main objective of the range program is to produce a maximum sustained yield of livestock forage on BLM lands. The improvement and maintenance of watershed conditions and the vegetative resource is inherent in this objective. Important factors of the range program and their respective allocations are listed by alternatives in Table 3.

Rangeland in the planning area is grazed by cattle, sheep, wild horses and numerous wildlife species. There are 121 livestock operators in 53 allotments with 331,100 Animal Unit Months (AUMs) harvested in 1981 by domestic livestock. Note, this consumption includes approximately 11,400 AUMs of temporary, non-renewable forage which may be allocated under annual permits and is contingent upon satisfactory range conditions.

## Forage Allocations (Initial)

Forage allocations for livestock would vary among alternatives to accommodate other resource values. Alternative A would allocate all available forage (see Glossary) to livestock. Alternative B would require an allocation of livestock forage to accommodate wildlife values and some wild horse and riparian values. Alternatives C and D would accommodate wildlife values, special management areas, and higher levels of wild horses and riparian protection. Refer to individual sections concerning each resource; riparian information is included in the wildlife section.

## Potential Forage Production Increases

Forage production for livestock could be increased in the short term by water developments and land treatments. Production would also be increased over the long term by improvement in rangeland condition.

## 1. Management

### Allotment Management Plans (AMPs) and Grazing Systems

AMPs are outlines developed to establish grazing systems for season of use, numbers of livestock, and range improvements. In some allotments, production increases may be realized only through improved grazing systems.

AMPs would be prepared for allotments either categorized as Improve or Maintain. The Improve allotments normally have the highest priority for AMPs and range improvements. AMPs are not proposed for Custodial allotments, and range improvements would have low priority for public funding. Present conditions, potential, present production, conflicts and controversy, present management, and economic returns were criteria used to determine allotment categories. Table 4 summarizes the acreage and number of allotments proposed in each category for Alternative A by application of those criteria.

AMPs would also be implemented (with the same priority) under Alternatives B, C, and D. Range improvements which conflicted with the desired levels of resource protection under these alternatives would be excluded, however. Table 3 displays the differences in production increases and range improvements between the four alternatives.

## Fencing

Intensive and effective management of rangelands is dependent upon adequate fencing. Fencing would improve livestock distribution and permit grazing systems which would allow deferral and resting of rangelands.

Alternative A would allow the construction of all proposed livestock fences. Alternative B and C would allow all fences needed for AMPs except in Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) and Research Natural Areas (RNAs). Fencing would be limited in proposed Horse Management Areas (HMAs) where movement of wild horses would be restricted.

## Water Development and Pipelines

Water developments could lengthen the season of use, achieve a more even distribution of livestock grazing, and make available more range to grazing. Water developments will be allowed in proposed WSAs under Alternatives B and C as long as they do not impair wilderness values. No water developments would be allowed in WSAs under Alternative D. Site specific analyses would be conducted for all proposed projects in WSAs to determine whether they would comply with wilderness interim management policy. Major water developments, such as large pipeline systems, would generally be excluded under Alternatives C and D. Water developments would not be built in pastures proposed for special riparian management or protection.



Table 3

**FORAGE AND LAND USE ALLOCATIONS**

		Alternatives			
	Units	A	B	C	D
SOUTHERN MALHEUR PLANNING AREA CURRENT FORAGE ALLOCATIONS					
Livestock Active Preference <sup>1</sup>	AUMs			319,671	
Livestock Suspended Preference <sup>1</sup>	AUMs			22,676	
ALLOCATIONS OF EXISTING FORAGE PRODUCTION					
Livestock Forage	AUMs	511,558	466,002	416,025	346,134
Wild Horse Forage	AUMs	0	14,761	49,849	74,527 <sup>3</sup>
Wildlife Forage (competitive)	AUMs	0	4,938	5,927	5,927
Competitive Forage Reservations:					
Riparian Areas	AUMs	0	25,794	38,812	84,025
RNAs	AUMs	0	0	810	810
Exclosures	AUMs	0	63	135	135
Total Competitive Forage Allocated	AUMs	511,558	511,558	511,558	511,558
Total Non-Competitive Forage	AUMs	33,774	33,774	33,774	33,744
POTENTIAL FORAGE PRODUCTION INCREASES AND ASSOCIATED LAND TREATMENTS <sup>4</sup>					
Water Development Projects	Numbers	750	699	615	470
	AUMs	15,450	15,290	11,728	9,150
Land Treatments:	Numbers	449	437	388	300
Brush Control	Acres	246,047	266,539	148,114	123,415
	AUMs	20,078	22,268	11,977	8,582
Seedings	Acres	113,990	105,890	51,699	44,734
	AUMs	16,473	14,940	7,173	6,688
Total Potential Production Increase	AUMs	134,047	125,973	93,751	86,622
Short Term Increases	AUMs	83,145	77,795	47,806	41,348
Long Term Increases	AUMs	49,290	46,566	45,945	45,274
Proposes Fences	Miles	250	225	216	129
Riparian Zones to be Protected:	Miles	0	130	266	339
By Controlling Grazing	Miles	0	111	247	45
By Excluding Grazing	Miles	0	19	19	294
RANGELAND INVESTMENT PROPOSALS					
Benefits <sup>5</sup>	(\$1000)	6,109	6,197	5,235	5,011
Costs <sup>6</sup>	(\$1000)	7,859	8,071	5,418	4,592
Benefit/Cost Ratio		.78	.77	.97	1.09
BLM Construction Costs	(\$1000)	7,844	7,799	5,140	4,195
Average Annual Maintenance Costs	(\$1000)	205	223	164	145

<sup>1</sup> See glossary for definitions.<sup>2</sup> AUMs - Acreal Unit Months - see glossary<sup>3</sup> AUMs reduced in Alternative "D" to accommodate wildlife, riparian areas and special management areas.<sup>4</sup> Potential forage production increases and land treatments that require Congressional funding are subject to budget constraints.<sup>5</sup> Discounted at 7.625% for 50 years.<sup>6</sup> Public and private costs for construction, maintenance and management for a fifty year period, discounted at 7.625%.











## 2. Land Treatments

Two types of land treatments are proposed; brush controls (either through prescribed burning or chemical treatment) and seedings (generally plowing and drilling or broadcast seeding of grasses such as crested wheatgrass). These treatments would be initiated in conjunction with AMPs and are important to in the development of sound grazing systems. Alternative A would allow 360,037 acres of proposed land treatments for livestock.

Some of the land treatment areas proposed under Alternative A would be eliminated in Alternatives B, C and D in riparian areas, ACECs, RNAs, and WSAs proposed in each alternative. Alternative B would add brush controls for wild horses in certain HMAs. In Alternative B certain critical wildlife areas would not be treated if forage demands were met. Critical wildlife areas would not be treated in Alternatives C and D.

Consideration is also given to scenic resources in excluding some treatments under Alternatives B, C, and D. Map 2 shows the location of land treatments and Table 3 lists specific allocations and land treatments for each alternative.

As a result of these priorities and trade-offs, Alternative B land treatments would amount to 372,429 acres; Alternative C 199,813 acres; Alternative D 168,149 acres.

Wildlife habitat needs will increase in the future because of the past conversion of large areas of big sagebrush to livestock forage on private and public lands. Alternatives B, C, and D would protect certain existing and potential riparian areas from land treatments and would increasingly limit the treatments in each alternative to protect big game winter range and other important habitats.

Total project costs for each alternative are displayed in Table 3. An efficiency screening of individual land treatments and range improvements was developed for each allotment using gains in domestic livestock AUMs as a measure of benefits. This analysis revealed that many of the range improvements

currently proposed in each alternative may not be cost effective and would not justify an investment of Federal funds. However, due to the lack of data on other multiple use benefits, and the possibility of private investments, no technically feasible projects were eliminated from any alternative.

Results of a more recent detailed preliminary range investment analysis indicate that investment proposals for many allotments must be revised to improve returns per dollar invested (see Table 3). Prior to the selection of a preferred alternative an analysis of revised investment plans will be prepared and presented in the Grazing Environmental Impact Statement for the Southern Malheur EIS area.

## 3. Long-Term Increases in Forage Production

Under proper range management, long-term (15 years or more) increases in forage production may be achieved as a result of improvements in rangeland condition and trend. The additional forage would be allocated to livestock in Alternative A. Livestock allocations would decrease in Alternatives B, C, and D with allocations to wildlife, wildhorses and other uses taking priority.

## 4. Livestock Adjustments

Proper stocking rates must be used to reach maximum potential and improve range condition. All four alternatives would adjust livestock use to conform to available forage production. In all alternatives, increases or decreases in livestock use would be accomplished within current regulatory guidelines.

Some existing grazing allotments may be further divided after forage allocation decisions are made, but before AMPs are developed. These divisions would be administrative actions only, and are not included in this plan.

Table 4

### SELECTIVE MANAGEMENT CATEGORIES

Allotments	Selective Management Categories			
	Maintain	Improve	Custodial	Unallotted <sup>2</sup>
Numbers	23	14	13	3
Acres <sup>1</sup>	2,226,481	1,482,223	225,889	9,467

<sup>1</sup> Federal acres only

<sup>2</sup> Three areas totaling 7,707 acres have been assigned allotment numbers but are not currently formal allotments.



## 5. Shifts in Livestock Use

Permanent shifts in livestock use from one grazing allotment to another will be considered in the Vale District as a means to meet the preference for grazing of domestic livestock under the following circumstances.

1. First allocations of surplus forage will be made to existing permittees in proportion to the increased forage production.
2. The allotments from which livestock use shifts will be made must have suspended preference or pending reductions.
3. The allotments to receive shifts of livestock use must have surplus forage in excess of 5 percent above active preference plus any increases granted under Number 1 above.

Applications for shifted livestock use would be evaluated on a case by case basis. Items such as compatibility of operations, reasons for reductions in the area to be shifted from, and other relevant factors will be considered. Shifts will be made on a temporary basis for a minimum of 5 years or until monitoring studies indicate objectives are or will be met with the additional use.

## WILDERNESS PROGRAM

A total of 36 Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) comprising 1,445,500 acres within the Southern Malheur and Northern Malheur Resource Areas and two WSAs in the Burns and Winnemucca Districts are being evaluated for possible inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

The four alternative allocations of WSAs being covered within this planning effort are described below. The physical characteristics, wilderness values, manageability problems and resource conflicts are described for those study areas or portions thereof which would be recommended for wilderness designation under each alternative.

It should be noted that because the goals and objectives of each alternative vary, as does the importance (priority) of wilderness, the amount of wilderness acreage proposed for designation increases from Alternatives B through D. In addition to the descriptions, the differences in the alternatives are shown in Map 3 and 4 and Table 5.

**Alternative A** - This alternative maximizes the development and production of commodity resources and the enhancement of local economic benefits. No wilderness study areas are recommended for wilderness.

**Alternative B** - This alternative emphasizes the production of commodity resources while accommodating natural and cultural values. All or part of 15 wilderness study areas (349,300 acres) with no serious manageability problems or major resource conflicts are recommended for wilderness designation. There are no proposed road closures or combinations of WSAs in this alternative.

**Alternative C** - This alternative emphasizes the protection and enhancement of natural and cultural values while accommodating the development and production of commodity resources. All or part of 26 Wilderness Study Areas (906,300 acres) are recommended for wilderness designation. Only those WSAs or portions of WSAs which have serious manageability problems are not recommended.

**Alternative D** - This alternative maximizes protection and enhancement of natural and cultural values. All 36 Wilderness Study Areas (1,445,500 acres) are recommended for wilderness designation.

### Castle Rock (3-18)

**Alternative D** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation. This 6,200 acre WSA includes the prominent landmark Castle Rock, the neck of an extinct volcano. Castle Rock ridge and the surrounding steep slopes contain the largest diversity of plants and animals in the District. There are exceptional scenic vistas as well as a wide variety of high quality recreational opportunities.

**Alternative C** - The entire WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation because of manageability problems with configuration, peripheral non-public lands, a pre-FLPMA utility right-of-way, confined user patterns, and its relatively small size.

**Alternative B** - There are no major resource conflicts. The entire WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation because of manageability problems.

### Beaver Dam Creek (3-27)

**Alternative D** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation. This 19,500 acre WSA includes a series of high elevation ridges and valleys covered by a shrub-grassland plant community with scattered pockets of ponderosa pine, quaking aspen and western juniper. The area offers a wide variety of high quality recreational opportunities and an outstanding opportunity for solitude.

**Alternative C** - The entire WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation because of manageability problems with configuration, peripheral non-public lands and non-federal mineral estate.

**Alternative B** - The entire WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation because of manageability problems and resource conflicts which include the following proposed projects: portions of three brush controls, a fence, a spring development, and three reservoirs.



### **Camp Creek (3-31)**

**Alternative D** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation. This 19,200 acre WSA is composed of tableland dissected by several major canyons. Over 6 miles of a perennial stream, Cottonwood Creek, parallel the eastern boundary. Red-band trout and numerous raptors inhabit the area. The rugged topography provides excellent opportunities for solitude, hiking, camping, hunting, photography and sightseeing.

**Alternative C** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation in combination with the Cottonwood Creek, Gold Creek and Sperry Creek WSAs to form one 47,100 acre area. Portions of three roads would be closed to combine these WSAs

**Alternative B** - A portion of the WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation because of resource conflicts which include an existing powerline corridor, access to private property, construction of four reservoirs, and ORV use. Approximately 9,500 acres have no major resource conflicts or serious manageability problems and are recommended for wilderness designation.

### **Cottonwood Creek (3-32)**

**Alternative D** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation. This 8,700 acre WSA shares a common road boundary along Cottonwood Creek with the Camp Creek WSA. The physical features and wilderness characteristics of the two WSAs are very similar, except this WSA contains several paleontological sites and a wild horse herd.

**Alternative C** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation in combination with Camp Creek, Gold Creek and Sperry Creek WSAs.

**Alternative B** - The entire WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation because of resource conflicts, which include an existing powerline corridor, a horse trap and ORV use. After adjusting the boundary to exclude these conflicts, the remaining area is not manageable due to the area's configuration, relatively small size and influences from external imprints.

### **Gold Creek (3-33)**

**Alternative D** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation. This 13,600 acre WSA consists of two major canyons (Gold Creek and the North Fork of Squaw Creek) and a plateau in the southern portion. The rugged canyons provide habitat for the red-band trout, critical deer winter range, several high quality recreational opportunities and outstanding solitude.

**Alternative C** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation in combination with the Camp Creek, Cottonwood Creek and Sperry Creek WSAs.

**Alternative B** - A portion of the WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation because of resource conflicts, which include an existing transportation/utility corridor, ORV use, construction of two reservoirs, and unrestricted access and maintenance of existing projects. Approximately 6,700 acres have no major resource conflicts or serious manageability problems and are recommended for wilderness designation.

### **Sperry Creek (3-35)**

**Alternative D** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation. This 5,600 acre WSA, like the neighboring Gold Creek WSA, contains two major canyons (Indian and Sperry) and a plateau. Critical deer and antelope winter range, plus high quality sightseeing, photography, chukar hunting and solitude can be found in the canyons.

**Alternative C** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation in combination with the Camp Creek, Cottonwood Creek and Gold Creek WSAs.

**Alternative B** - The entire WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation because of resource conflicts, which include an existing transportation/utility corridor, ORV use, construction of three reservoirs, and unrestricted access and maintenance of existing projects. After adjusting the boundary to exclude these conflicts the area would lack the minimum wilderness characteristics and be too small to effectively manage.

### **Cedar Mountain (3-47)**

**Alternative D** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation. This 33,600 acre WSA includes Cedar Mountain and its slopes, an "island" ecosystem of juniper surrounded by sagebrush and bunchgrass. The area offers an outstanding opportunity for solitude, plus several high quality recreational opportunities.

**Alternative C** - The entire WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation because of manageability problems with non-federal mineral estate, private inholdings, interior dead-end roads, and a non-conforming use resulting from a significant concentration of range projects which require continued and frequent access and maintenance.

**Alternative B** - The entire WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation because of manageability problems and resource conflicts which include the following proposed projects: portions of four brush controls, a fence, four reservoirs, three wildlife guzzlers and a utility corridor.



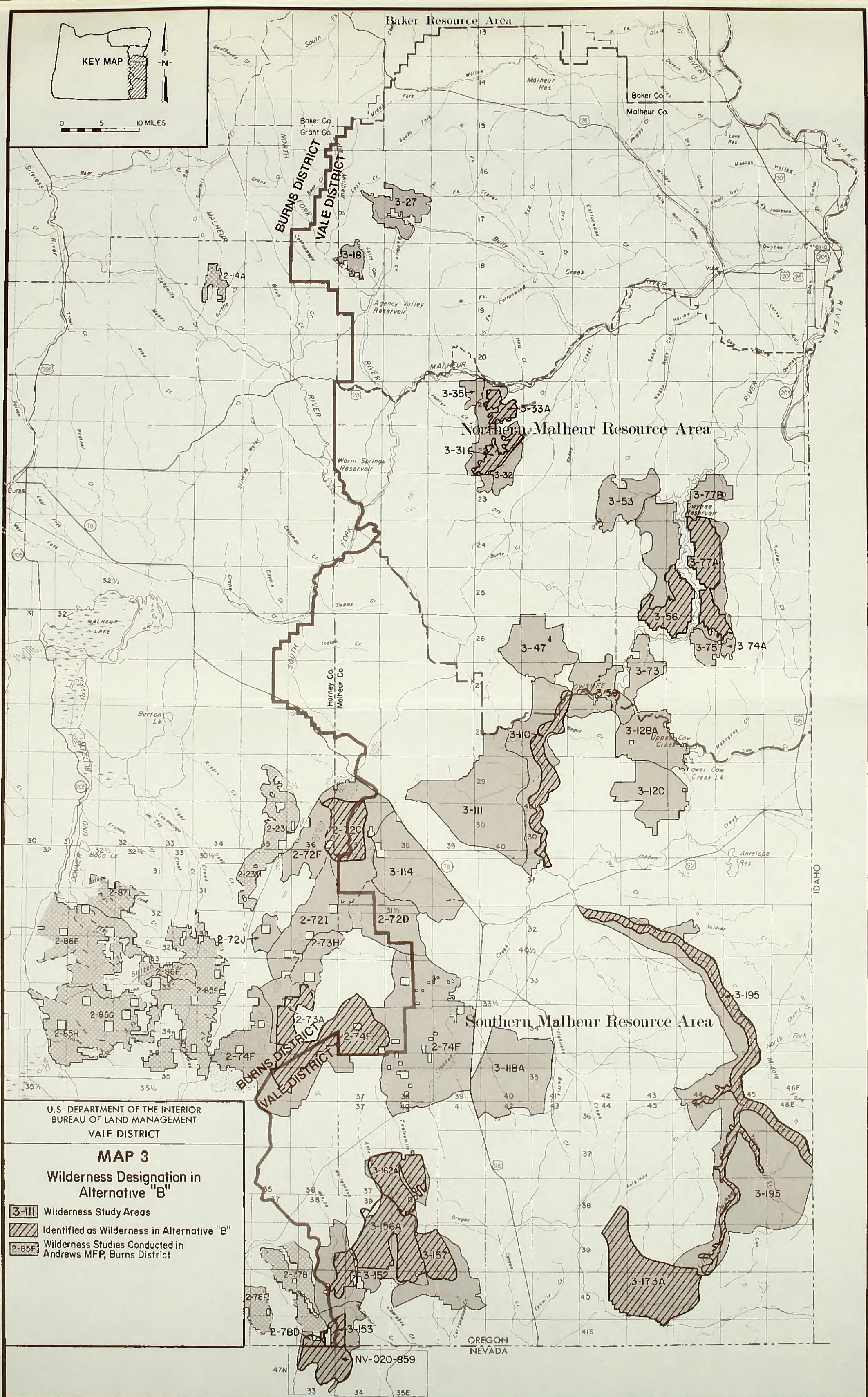
Table 5

**WILDERNESS****Alternatives (Acreage)**

WSA Names & Numbers		A	B	C	D
Castle Rock	3-18	0	0	0	6,200
Beaver Dam Creek	3-27	0	0	0	19,500
Camp Creek	3-31	0	9,500	19,200 <sup>1</sup>	19,200
Cottonwood Creek	3-32	0	0	8,700 <sup>1</sup>	8,700
Gold Creek	3-33A	0	6,700	13,600 <sup>1</sup>	13,600
Sperry Creek	3-35	0	0	5,600 <sup>1</sup>	5,600
Cedar Mountain	3-47	0	0	0	33,600
Dry Creek	3-53	0	0	0	23,500
Dry Creek Buttes	3-56	0	22,000	26,800 <sup>2</sup>	51,800
Owyhee Breaks	3-59	0	0	0	13,100
Blue Canyon	3-73	0	0	0	12,700
Upper Leslie Gulch	3-74	0	0	3,000 <sup>2</sup>	3,000
Slocum Creek	3-75	0	0	7,600 <sup>2</sup>	7,600
Honeycombs	3-77A	0	26,600	34,700 <sup>2</sup>	39,000
Wild Horse Basin	3-77B	0	0	0	12,100
Lower Owyhee Canyon	3-110	0	10,500	62,300 <sup>3</sup>	75,300
Saddle Butte	3-111	0	0	86,300	86,300
Palomino Hills	3-114	0	0	54,600 <sup>4</sup>	54,600
Bowden Hills	3-118	0	0	0	59,900
Clarks Butte	3-120	0	0	0	31,500
Jordan Craters	3-128	0	0	0	27,900
Willow Creek	3-152	0	9,500	14,000 <sup>5</sup>	30,000 <sup>7</sup>
Disaster Peak	3-153	0	16,400	29,900 <sup>5</sup>	31,500 <sup>8</sup>
Fifteen-Mile Canyon	3-156	0	43,800	51,300 <sup>5</sup>	51,300
Oregon Canyon	3-157	0	12,000	13,300 <sup>5</sup>	42,900
Twelve-Mile Canyon	3-162	0	25,800	25,800 <sup>5</sup>	28,600
Upper West Little Owyhee	3-173	0	62,500	62,500 <sup>3</sup>	62,500
Owyhee Canyon	3-195	0	33,000	146,000 <sup>3</sup>	190,700 <sup>9</sup>
Sheephead Mtn.	2-72C	0	21,000	44,600 <sup>4</sup>	53,200 <sup>10</sup>
Wildcat Canyon	2-72D	0	0	34,600 <sup>4</sup>	34,600 <sup>11</sup>
Heath Lake	2-72F	0	0	10,900 <sup>4</sup>	20,100 <sup>12</sup>
Table Mtn.	2-72I	0	0	38,600 <sup>4</sup>	38,600 <sup>12</sup>
West Peak	2-72J	0	0	7,900 <sup>4</sup>	7,900 <sup>12</sup>
East Alvord	2-73A	0	13,200	21,600 <sup>6</sup>	21,600 <sup>12</sup>
Winter Range	2-73H	0	0	14,800 <sup>6</sup>	14,800 <sup>12</sup>
Alvord Desert	2-74F	0	36,800	68,100 <sup>6</sup>	212,500 <sup>13</sup>
<b>TOTAL</b>		0	349,300	906,300	1,445,500

<sup>1</sup> Would be managed as one 47,100 acre wilderness - Cottonwood Creek.<sup>2</sup> Would be managed as one 72,100 acre wilderness - Honeycombs.<sup>3</sup> Would be managed as one 260,500 acre wilderness in conjunction with contiguous WSAs in Idaho - Owyhee Canyon.<sup>4</sup> Would be managed as one 206,400 acre unit (includes 15,200 acres of non-USA lands) - Sheepheads Mtns.<sup>5</sup> Would be managed as one 133,000 acre unit - Trout Creek Mtns.<sup>6</sup> Would be managed as one 104,500 acre unit - Alvord Desert.<sup>7</sup> WSA 3-152 contains 30,000 acres, 1,700 acres are in the Burns District.<sup>8</sup> WSA 3-153 contains 31,500 acres, 3,200 acres are in the Burns District and 13,200 acres are in the Winnemucca District.<sup>9</sup> Only includes acres in WSA 3-195 located in Oregon. It does not include the 33,700 acres in the Boise District.<sup>10</sup> WSA 2-72C contains 53,200 acres, 22,600 acres are in the Burns District.<sup>11</sup> WSA 2-72D contains 34,600 acres, 8,500 acres are in the Burns District.<sup>12</sup> All of the WSAs 2-72 F, I, J, 2-73A, and H are in the Burns District.<sup>13</sup> WSA 2-74F contains 212,500 acres, 80,900 acres are in the Burns District.

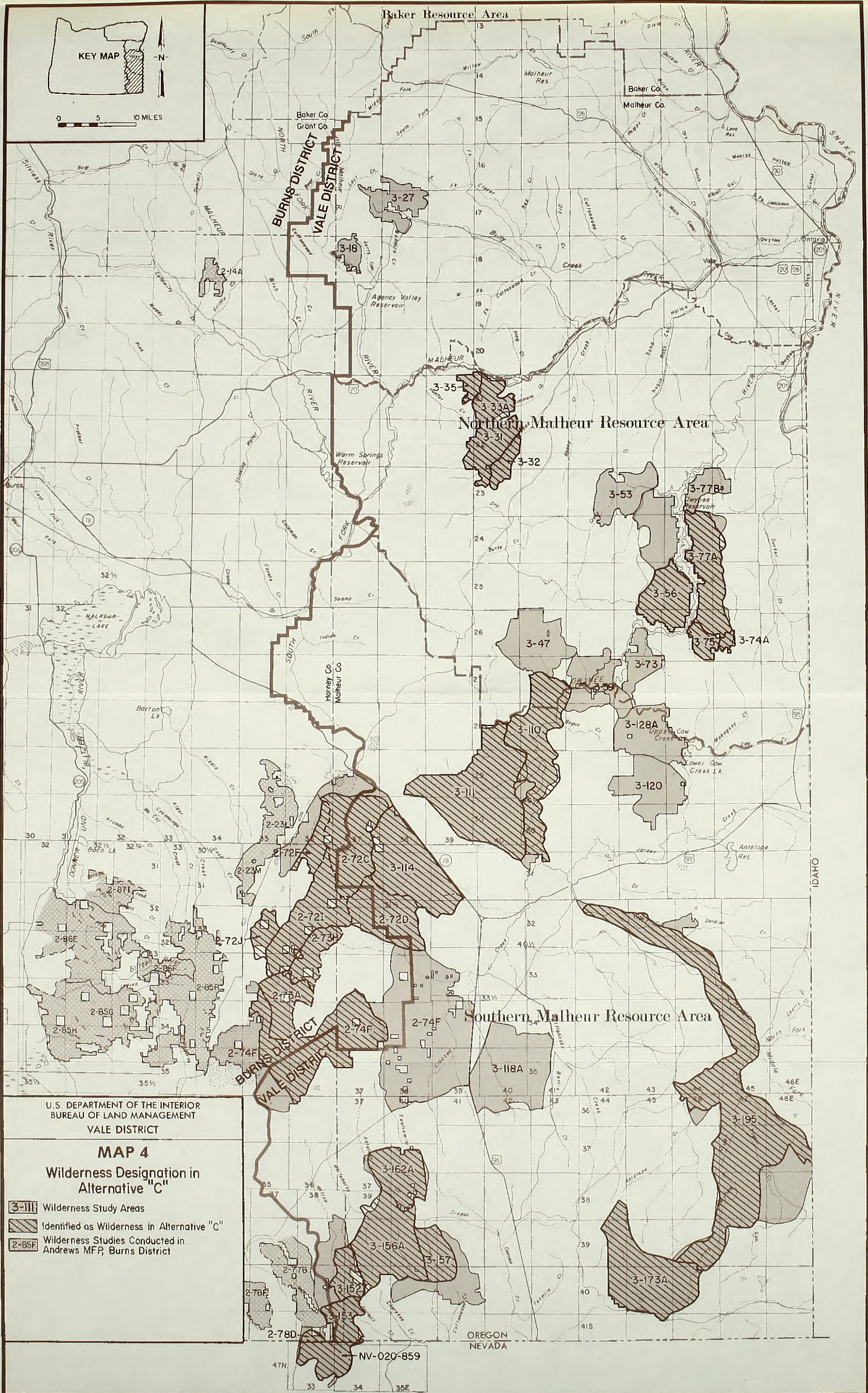


















### Dry Creek (3-53)

**Alternative D** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation. This 23,500 acre WSA includes 9 miles of Dry Creek Canyon and the surrounding rolling hills dissected by numerous smaller drainages. The area offers interesting geologic formations, several possible rare and endangered plants, important riparian habitat and a diversity of recreation opportunities.

**Alternative C** - The entire WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation because of manageability problems with non-federal mineral estate, confined user patterns and external influences.

**Alternative B** - The entire WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation because of manageability problems and resource conflicts which include the following proposed projects: a portion of a seeding, brush control, spring development, fences, and two wildlife guzzlers.

### Dry Creek Buttes (3-56)

**Alternative D** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation. This 51,800 acre WSA located along the west side of the Owyhee Reservoir contains some of the most rugged and varied terrain in the District. Special features of the area include interesting geologic features, rare and endangered plants, raptors and reptile habitat, and outstanding scenery. Excellent opportunities for solitude, hiking, photography and sightseeing are available.

**Alternative C** - Approximately the northern half (25,000 acres) is not recommended for wilderness designation because of manageability problems with influences from external imprints. The southern half (26,800 acres) is recommended for wilderness designation and proposed to be managed as one wilderness area in combination with the Upper Leslie Gulch, Slocum Creek and Honeycombs WSAs.

**Alternative B** - A portion of the WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation because of resource conflicts, which include ORV use, access to an existing airstrip and the following proposed projects: portion of a brush control, three reservoirs, a fence, and 15 wildlife guzzlers. A portion of the WSA also has manageability problems. Approximately 22,000 acres have no major resource conflicts or serious manageability problems and are recommended for wilderness designation.

### Owyhee Breaks (3-59)

**Alternative D** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation. This 13,100 acre WSA includes the portion of the Owyhee River from the Hole-In-The-Ground Ranch to the Birch Creek Ranch. Also included in the WSA are tablelands

above the canyon rims and steep, broken, rock-strewn hills below the rim. The area provides critical deer winter range, high quality raptor, reptile, and fishery habitat, numerous archaeological and historical sites, outstanding scenery, unique ecological interrelationships and opportunities for educational and scientific study.

**Alternative C** - The entire WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation because of manageability problems with private inholdings, configuration, pre-FLPMA mining claims and external influences.

**Alternative B** - There are no resource conflicts. The entire WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation because of manageability problems.

### Blue Canyon (3-73)

**Alternative D** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation. This 12,700 acre WSA consists mainly of a long narrow ridge, Diamond Butte, which parallels the Owyhee River to its east. Wilderness values are very similar to the nearby Owyhee Breaks WSA. The major exception is that the Owyhee River is adjacent to this WSA but not included within its boundaries.

**Alternative C** - The entire WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation because of manageability problems with pre-FLPMA mining claims, an interior dead-end road, configuration, a private inholding, peripheral non-public lands and legal access.

**Alternative B** - The entire WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation because of manageability problems and resource conflicts which include portions of a proposed seeding and four proposed spring developments.

### Upper Leslie Gulch (3-74)

**Alternative D** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation. This 3,000 acre WSA includes the upper most portion of Leslie Gulch. Its wilderness values are very similar to WSA 3-75 and 3-77A. Refer to 3-77A (Honeycombs) for a description.

**Alternative C** - The entire WSA would be combined with the Slocum Creek WSA and be managed with the Honeycombs and Dry Creek Buttes WSAs as one wilderness. A 1-mile road segment between this WSA and Slocum Creek WSA is proposed to be closed in order to combine these WSAs.

**Alternative B** - There are no major resource conflicts. However, if the boundary is adjusted to exclude influences from external imprints, and the road which separates this WSA and Slocum Creek WSA is not closed, the area is too small to be manageable.



### **Slocum Creek (3-75)**

**Alternative D** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation. This 7,600 acre WSA includes extremely steep rugged ridges and gulches along the southeast edge of the Owyhee Reservoir. Its wilderness values are very similar to WSA 3-74 and 3-77A. Refer to 3-77A for a description.

**Alternative C** - The entire WSA would be combined with the Upper Leslie Gulch WSA and would be managed in combination with the Honeycombs and Dry Creek Buttes WSAs as one wilderness.

**Alternative B** - The entire WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation because of resource conflicts, which include the following proposed projects: a pipeline, two spring developments and a wildlife guzzler. After adjusting the boundary to exclude these conflicts the remainder is too small to be manageable.

### **Honeycombs (3-77A)**

**Alternative D** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation. This 39,000 acre WSA contains the most distinctive and rugged terrain in the District. The Leslie Gulch Ash-Flow Tuff formations have been compared to Bryce and Zion National Parks in terms of color, interest and scenic quality. This is a biologically sensitive area with extremely fragile soils and rock formations. Rare and endangered plants, bighorn sheep, raptors, reptiles, critical deer winter range and geologic features are some of the more outstanding values of the area. Exceptional opportunities for hiking, hunting, photography, sightseeing and solitude are available.

**Alternative C** - Portions of this WSA, totalling 4,300 acres located along the eastern boundary, are not recommended for wilderness designation because of manageability problems with influences from external imprints. The remaining 34,700 acres are recommended for wilderness designation and proposed to be managed as one wilderness area in combination with the Upper Leslie Gulch, Slocum Creek and Dry Creek Buttes WSAs for a total of 72,100 acres.

**Alternative B** - A portion of the WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation because of resource conflicts, which include ORV use, numerous mining claims, and the following proposed projects: brush controls, two spring developments and four wildlife guzzlers. A portion of the WSA also has manageability problems. Approximately 26,600 acres have no major resource conflicts or serious manageability problems and are recommended for wilderness designation.

### **Wild Horse Basin (3-77B)**

**Alternative D** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation. This 12,100 acre WSA includes plateaus, rolling hills and highly dissected drainages which empty into the northeastern portion of the Owyhee Reservoir. The opportunity to achieve solitude is outstanding and there is a wide variety of recreational opportunities available.

**Alternative C** - The entire WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation because of manageability problems with a private inholding, an interior dead-end road, a pipeline right-of-way, configuration, and influences from external imprints.

**Alternative B** - There are no major resource conflicts. The entire WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation because of manageability problems.

### **Lower Owyhee River (3-110)**

**Alternative D** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation. This 75,300 acre WSA includes approximately 32 miles of the Owyhee River Canyon from just north of Rome, Oregon to the Hole-In-The-Ground Ranch. Wilderness values include interesting geologic formations, numerous sensitive plants, critical deer winter range, an excellent fishery, raptor and waterfowl habitat, outstanding scenery, and numerous archaeological sites. Many excellent recreational opportunities and outstanding solitude are also available.

**Alternative C** - Approximately 13,000 acres are not recommended for wilderness designation because of manageability problems with configuration, private inholdings, interior dead-end roads, and influences from external imprints. The remaining 62,300 acres are recommended for wilderness designation and proposed to be managed as one wilderness area in combination with the Owyhee Canyon WSA, the Upper West Little Owyhee WSA, and the contiguous WSAs in Idaho.

**Alternative B** - A portion of the WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation because of resource conflicts which include a high potential building stone site, a high potential zeolite/bentonite mining area, ORV use, unrestricted access and maintenance of existing projects, and the following proposed projects; portions of two brush control projects, a utility corridor, a wildlife guzzler, three fences, a reservoir, and a spring development. A portion of the WSA also has manageability problems.

Approximately 10,500 acres have no major resource conflicts or serious manageability problems and are recommended for wilderness designation.



### **Saddle Butte (3-111)**

**Alternative D** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation. This 86,300 acre WSA includes a large middle-aged lava field with some very unique lava tubes. Kit fox (threatened status in Oregon) and many wild horses are present. Opportunities for solitude and several high quality recreational activities are also available.

**Alternative C** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation.

**Alternative B** - The entire WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation because of resource conflicts which include a horse trap with an access road, three proposed brush controls, and the following proposed projects; three brush controls, an existing utility corridor, seven reservoirs, nine guzzlers, two wells, and two spring developments.

### **Palamino Hills (3-114)**

**Alternative D** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation. This 54,600 acre WSA includes a majority of the gentle eastern slopes of the Sheepheads Mountain Range. Several sensitive plants, numerous wild horses, archaeological sites, and kit fox may be found in this area, as well as an opportunity for solitude.

**Alternative C** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation in combination with the Sheepshead Mountain, Wildcat Canyon, Heath Lake, Table Mountain and West Peak WSAs. Several road closures are proposed.

**Alternative B** - The entire WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation because of resource conflicts which include five material sites, a transportation/utility corridor and the following proposed projects: three brush controls, eight reservoirs, three wells, and two developed springs.

### **Bowden Hills (3-118)**

**Alternative D** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation. This 59,900 acre WSA consists of rims, hills, slopes and flats. The area offers outstanding solitude, raptor habitat and is identified as kit fox habitat.

**Alternative C** - The entire WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation because of manageability problems with right-of-ways, an interior dead-end road, influences from external imprints and unrestricted vehicle access.

**Alternative B** - The entire WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation because of manageability problems and resource conflicts which include: a proposed pipeline, a proposed reservoir, a utility corridor, and a highway corridor.

### **Clarks Butte (3-120)**

**Alternative D** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation. This 31,500 acre WSA includes a middle-aged lava field and two prominent buttes. Special interests include interesting lava features such as tubes, vents, pressure ridges, fissures, cones and craters.

**Alternative C** - The entire WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation because of manageability problems with non-federal mineral estate, configuration, an interior dead-end road, peripheral private property, and low solitude and recreational opportunities.

**Alternative B** - The entire WSA is not recommended because of manageability problems and resource conflicts which include the following proposed projects: a reservoir, brush control, wildlife guzzler, well, pipeline and utility corridor.

### **Jordan Craters (3-128)**

**Alternative D** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation. This 27,900 acre WSA includes the Jordan Craters, a Research Natural Area. This recent lava flow displays exceptionally unique and fragile lava features. Many special features, such as Batch Lakes, Fern Dome, Coffee Pot Crater and the kipukas offer outstanding educational and scientific study opportunities, unique ecological interrelationships, scenic quality, recreation opportunities, and solitude.

**Alternative C** - The entire WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation because of manageability problems with private inholdings, non-federal estate, interior dead-end roads, color-of-title application, and extremely fragile and sensitive resources.

**Alternative B** - The entire WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation because of resource conflicts, which include a proposed pipeline and a high potential cinder and slab rock site and because of manageability problems.



### **Willow Creek (3-152)**

**Alternative D** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation. This 30,000 acre WSA includes two major perennial streams, Willow and Whitehorse Creeks, and is a part of the Trout Creek Mountains. The wilderness values are similar for all five of the WSAs in the Trout Creek Mountains. They include interesting canyons, diversity of plant and animal species, outstanding scenery, important trout habitat, numerous archaeological sites, abundant solitude, and many high quality recreational opportunities.

**Alternative C** - Approximately 16,000 acres are not recommended for wilderness designation because of manageability problems with private inholdings, configuration and influences from external imprints. The remaining 14,000 acres are recommended for wilderness designation and proposed to be managed as one wilderness area in combination with the Disaster Peak, Fifteenmile Creek, Oregon Canyon and Twelvemile Creek WSAs. Several road closures are proposed.

**Alternative B** - A portion of the WSA is not recommended because of resource conflicts which include a high potential uranium and diatomite area and a proposed seeding. A portion of the WSA also has manageability problems. Approximately 9,500 acres have no major resource conflicts or serious manageability problems and are recommended for wilderness designation.

### **Disaster Peak (3-153)**

**Alternative D** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation. This 31,500 acre WSA is also located in the Trout Creek Mountains. It is situated partially in Nevada (WSA NV-020-859, 13,200 acres) and partially in Oregon (WSA 3-153 25,100 acres and WSA 2-78D 3,200 acres). Numerous small streams, including the head waters of McDermitt Creek and the Kings River, radiate from the high ridge along the western boundary. Wilderness values are very similar to those found in the Willow Creek WSA.

**Alternative C** - Approximately 1,600 acres are not recommended for wilderness designation because of manageability problems with configuration and influences from external imprints. The remaining 29,900 acres are recommended for wilderness designation in combination with the Willow Creek, Fifteenmile Creek, Oregon Canyon and Twelvemile Creek WSAs.

**Alternative B** - A portion of the WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation because of resource conflicts which include a high potential uranium, mercury, lithium and molybdenum areas and a proposed fence. A portion of the WSA also has manageability problems. Approximately 16,400 acres have no major resource conflicts or serious

manageability problems and are recommended for wilderness designation.

### **Fifteenmile Creek (3-156)**

**Alternative D** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation. This 51,300 acre WSA is also located in the Trout Creek Mountains. It contains Whitehorse, Fifteenmile, Doolittle and Sheepline Creeks. Its wilderness values are very similar to the Willow Creek WSA. Some of the outstanding recreational opportunities include hiking, camping, hunting, fishing, sightseeing, photography, bird watching, and winter sports.

**Alternative C** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation in combination with the Willow Creek, Disaster Peak, Oregon Canyon and Twelvemile Creek WSAs.

**Alternative B** - A portion of the WSA is not recommended because of resource conflicts which include a high potential uranium area. Approximately 43,800 acres have no major resource conflicts or serious manageability problems and are recommended for wilderness designation.

### **Oregon Canyon (3-157)**

**Alternative D** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation. This 42,900 acre WSA is also located in the Trout Creek Mountains. Oregon Canyon offers the same exceptional wilderness values found in the Willow Creek WSA.

**Alternative C** - Approximately 29,600 acres are not recommended for wilderness designation because of manageability problems with influences from external imprints. The remaining 13,300 acres are recommended for wilderness designation in combination with the Willow Creek, Disaster Peak, Fifteenmile Creek and Twelvemile Creek WSAs.

**Alternative B** - A portion of the WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation because of resource conflicts which include a high potential uranium area, and the following proposed projects: a utility corridor, a reservoir, five fences, a spring development and a pipeline. Approximately 12,000 acres have no major resource conflicts or serious manageability problems and are recommended for wilderness designation.



### **Twelvemile Creek (3-162)**

**Alternative D** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation. This 28,600 acre WSA, located in the Trout Creek Mountains, contains Antelope and Dry Creeks. Its wilderness values are similar to the Willow Creek WSA.

**Alternative C** - Approximately 2,800 acres are not recommended for wilderness designation because of manageability problems with influences from external imprints. The remaining 25,800 acres are recommended for wilderness designation in combination with Willow Creek, Disaster Peak, Fifteenmile Creek and Oregon Canyon WSAs.

**Alternative B** - There are no major resource conflicts. A portion of the WSA has manageability problems. Approximately 25,800 acres have no major resource conflicts or serious manageability problems and are recommended for wilderness designation.

### **Upper West Little Owyhee (3-173)**

**Alternative D** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation. This 62,500 acre WSA includes a large plateau area, 13 miles of Antelope Creek Canyon and 18 miles of the West Little Owyhee Canyon. Large concentrations of antelope, raptors and sage grouse frequent the area. Spectacular canyon scenery and many cultural sites are present. Excellent opportunities are available for solitude and to experience high quality recreational activities.

**Alternative C** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation and is proposed to be managed as one wilderness area in combination with the Lower Owyhee Canyon and Owyhee Canyon WSAs and the contiguous WSAs in Idaho.

**Alternative B** - There are no major resource conflicts or serious manageability problems with this WSA. All 62,500 acres are recommended for wilderness designation.

### **Owyhee Canyon (3-195)**

**Alternative D** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation. This 190,700 acre WSA extends into Idaho and contains over 78 miles of the Owyhee River and the West Little Owyhee Canyon. Its wilderness values are very similar to the Lower Owyhee Canyon WSA. Outstanding recreational opportunities include float boating, fishing, hiking, camping, hunting, bird watching, photography, and sightseeing.

**Alternative C** - Approximately 44,700 acres are not recommended for wilderness designation because of manageability problems with configuration, influences from imprints, and interior dead-end roads. The remaining 146,000 acres are recommended for wilderness designation in combination with the Lower Owyhee Canyon and Upper West Little Owyhee WSAs and contiguous WSAs in Idaho.

**Alternative B** - A portion of the WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation because of resource conflicts which include ORV use, unrestricted access, maintenance of existing projects, and the following proposed projects: three seedings, two brush control projects, nine reservoirs, a wildlife guzzler, and a spring development. A portion of the WSA also has manageability problems. Approximately 33,000 acres have no major resource conflicts or serious manageability problems and are recommended for wilderness designation.

### **Sheepshead Mountain (2-72C)**

**Alternative D** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation. This 53,200 acre WSA includes the main ridge of the Sheepshead Mountain Range. Wilderness values include sensitive plants, raptors, wild horses, cultural sites, scenic vistas and opportunities for solitude and recreation.

**Alternative C** - Approximately 8,600 acres are not recommended for wilderness designation because of manageability problems with private inholdings and influences from external imprints. The remaining 44,600 acres are recommended for wilderness designation in combination with the Palamino Hills, Wildcat Canyon, Heath Lake, Table Mountain and West Peak WSAs. Several road closures are proposed.

**Alternative B** - A portion of the WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation because of resource conflicts which include three proposed brush controls, two proposed reservoirs, and four proposed wildlife guzzlers. A portion of the WSA also has manageability problems. Approximately 21,000 acres have no major resource conflicts or serious manageability problems and are recommended for wilderness designation.



### **Wildcat Canyon (2-72D)**

**Alternative D** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation. This 34,600 acre WSA includes several rugged canyons along the southern slope of the Sheephead Mountain Range. Its wilderness values are similar to the Sheephead Mountain WSA.

**Alternative C** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation in combination with the Sheephead Mountain, Palamino Hills, Heath Lake, Table Mountain, and West Peak WSAs.

**Alternative B** - The entire WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation because of resource conflicts, which include the following proposed projects: two brush control projects, two pipelines, five reservoirs, three wildlife guzzlers, and a spring development.

### **Heath Lake (2-72F)**

**Alternative D** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation. This 20,100 acre WSA consists of lava fields, plateaus and rocky slopes. Its wilderness values are similar to the other WSAs in the Sheephead Mountains.

**Alternative C** - Approximately 9,200 acres are not recommended for wilderness designation because of manageability problems with influences from external imprints. The remaining 10,900 acres, plus an additional 15,200 acres outside the WSA, which improve the areas configuration and solitude manageability, are recommended for wilderness designation in combination with Sheephead Mountain, Wildcat Canyon, Palamino Hills, Table Mountain and West Peak WSAs.

**Alternative B** - There are no resource conflicts. However, with no road closures proposed in Alternative C, the portion remaining after the areas with manageability problems are excluded is too narrow to have wilderness characteristics.

### **Table Mountain (2-72I)**

**Alternative D** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation. This 38,600 acre WSA includes high plateaus and steep escarpments. Table Mountain and Mickey Basin are the area's most prominent features. Its wilderness values are similar to the other Sheephead Mountains WSAs.

**Alternative C** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation in combination with the Sheephead Mountain, Wildcat Canyon, Palamino Hills, Heath Lake, and West Peak WSAs.

**Alternative B** - The entire WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation because of resource conflicts which include a proposed brush control and a high potential geothermal area. After adjusting the boundary to exclude these areas, the remaining area does not have wilderness characteristics and is too small to be manageable.

### **West Peak (2-72J)**

**Alternative D** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation. This 7,900 acre WSA includes ridges, rims, and a broad valley. Its wilderness values are similar to the other Sheephead Mountain WSAs.

**Alternative C** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation in combination with the Sheephead Mountain, Wildcat Canyon, Palamino Hills, Heath Lake, and Table Mountain WSAs.

**Alternative B** - The entire WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation because of resource conflicts which include a high potential geothermal area. After adjusting the boundary to exclude this area, the remaining area does not have wilderness characteristics and is too small to be manageable.

### **East Alvord (2-73A)**

**Alternative D** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation. This 21,600 acre WSA includes the north/south rim which forms the eastern boundary of the Alvord Desert Basin. Its wilderness values are similar to the Alvord Desert WSA.

**Alternative C** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation in combination with the Alvord Desert and Winter Range WSAs. Several road closures are proposed.

**Alternative B** - A portion of the WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation because of resource conflicts which include a high potential geothermal area. Approximately 13,200 acres have no major resource conflicts or serious manageability problems and are recommended for wilderness designation.



## Winter Range (2-73H)

**Alternative D** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation. This 14,800 acre WSA includes plateaus, ridges, and a portion of Mickey Basin. Its wilderness values are similar to the Alvord Desert WSA.

**Alternative C** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation in combination with the Alvord Desert and East Alvord WSAs.

**Alternative B** - The entire WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation because of resource conflicts which include a high potential geothermal area. After adjusting the boundary to exclude this area, the remaining area does not have wilderness characteristics and is too small to be manageable.

## Alvord Desert (2-74F)

**Alternative D** - The entire WSA is recommended for wilderness designation. This 212,500 acre WSA includes the Alvord Desert and extends east across flat to rolling expanses to U.S. Highway 95. The area offers a diversity of plants (some of which are listed as sensitive and rare and endangered), wild horses, kit fox and abundant reptiles, and small mammals. Opportunities for solitude are outstanding as are several recreation activities.

**Alternative C** - Approximately 144,400 acres are not recommended for wilderness designation because of manageability problems with private inholdings, non-federal mineral estate, and unrestricted vehicle use. The remaining 68,100 acres are recommended for wilderness designation in combination with the East Alvord and Winter Range WSAs.

**Alternative B** - A portion of the WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation because of resource conflicts which include a high potential sodium area and geothermal area, and a horse trap with an access road. A portion of the WSA also has manageability problems. Approximately 36,800 acres have no major resource conflicts or serious manageability problems and are recommended for wilderness designation.

# WILDLIFE PROGRAM

Some 330 species of wildlife including fish, reptiles, birds and mammals inhabit the two Resource Areas. They are dependent on a wide variety of habitats, both in quality and quantity.

Management of wildlife habitat under the four alternatives would provide different levels of habitat diversity. The most significant and critical habitats are those associated with riparian areas, big game fawning and wintering ranges, areas occupied by threatened/endangered and sensitive species, sagegrouse strutting grounds, and bird nesting sites.

**Riparian Areas.** Riparian habitats are especially important because they are a critical source of biological diversity and are scarce within the resource areas. Degradation can adversely affect a wide range of wildlife values. In Alternative A, livestock grazing would continue in all riparian zones, but would be restricted to lower intensities in fenced zones associated with reservoirs, springs and streams. In Alternative B, livestock grazing would be controlled on 111 miles of major perennial streams with fishery potential and excluded from 19 miles of existing fenced streams and two major reservoirs. Fenced riparian zones, consisting of 18 fishery and 13 non-fishery reservoirs and 28 springs, would be excluded from grazing.

In addition to the protection provided in Alternative B, Alternative C would control livestock grazing in the riparian zones of an additional 194 miles of perennial, non-fishery streams and nine more fishery reservoirs would be fenced to exclude grazing of livestock and horses.

Alternative D would exclude livestock grazing from 294 miles of perennial streams and from the previously mentioned fenced riparian zones. (Important riparian zones, unfenced reservoirs, intermittent streams, etc., would be protected in Alternative D in those pastures or fields where these streams or improvements occur.)

In addition, 45 miles of intermittent riparian streams would receive restricted grazing, while 43 perennial reservoirs and 29 spring riparian areas would not be grazed.

Refer to Table 3 and Map 5 for differences between alternatives and riparian locations.

**Fisheries.** Several species of trout inhabit the streams and reservoirs of the planning area. The following trout species are found in the area: red-band, hybridized Lahontan cutthroat, rainbow, whitehorse cutthroat, brook, brown and California rainbow. Resident trout species are found in areas considered to be very marginal habitat for other trout, surviving in streams with high water temperatures, extreme silt problems, low water depths and little fish cover. Under more suitable stream and reservoir conditions these species exhibit rapid growth.



The distribution of warm water game fish is sparse in the area. Bass are found in a few reservoirs and the Owyhee and Malheur Rivers. White crappie are found only in Cow Lakes. Bluegills and yellow perch are also found in ponds and reservoirs.

The area provides 200 miles of fishery streams and 38 fishery reservoirs.

Riparian vegetation is of critical importance to trout in desert streams because the vegetation provides escape cover, helps cool summer water temperatures by shading, and slows stream bank erosion that can result in siltation of spawning and rearing areas. The quality of habitat along these streams is largely dependent upon the level of control and exclusion for livestock grazing under the various alternatives. (See the previous section.)

Proposed fishery habitat expansion would primarily benefit self-sustaining trout species including the rainbow/Lahontan hybrids and the whitehorse cutthroat trout. Priority would be given to the whitehorse trout, a subspecies listed by BLM as sensitive. Habitat would expand as a result of constructing new reservoirs, planting above stream barriers and stream pool development. Habitat would improve from increasing suitable stream pool habitats to approximately 50/50 riffle/pool ratio, eradicating non-game fish and removing silt accumulations from reservoirs containing fish during routine maintenance. See the riparian section for alternative allocations for fisheries.

**Big Game.** Mule deer normally occupy habitats of maximum vegetation cover, although topographic cover afforded by canyons, breaks, etc., provide some cover. Preferred summer range include: Stockade Mountains, Oregon Canyon and Trout Creek Mountains, Parsnip Peak, Three Forks, and adjacent to irrigated hay fields throughout the Southern Malheur Resource Area; Black Butte, Monument Peak, Rooster Comb, Cedar Mountain, Mahogany Mountain, Spring Mountain, and irrigated hay fields in the Northern Malheur Resource Area. Winter ranges are typically at lower elevations, often along canyons and other areas of topographic protection. Large concentrations of wintering mule deer occur along the Owyhee River Canyon from the confluence of Soldier Creek to the headwaters of Owyhee Reservoir and the Malheur River-Juntura-Riverside Areas.

The numbers of pronghorn antelope in the resource areas are largely attributed to the massive habitat alteration that occurred during the 1960's. Many of these livestock oriented actions favored antelope increases, with most occurring in the Soldier Creek, Jackies Butte and Cow Creek Units. Mule deer and pronghorn antelope population levels for BLM management purposes were developed in cooperation with the Oregon State Department of Fish and Wildlife and reflect target big game populations. For all alternatives, wildlife would be allocated 33,774

AUMs of noncompetitive forage, or forage not directly utilized by wild horses (in wild horse herd areas) or livestock. In alternative B 4,938 AUMs would be allocated to wildlife and 5,927 AUMs would be allocated in Alternatives C and D.

**Bighorn Sheep.** Reintroduction of California bighorn sheep is planned for several suitable habitats within the resource areas. This native big game species disappeared from local habitats about 1915, but was stocked in 1965 and has been successfully reestablished along the Owyhee Breaks in the Leslie Gulch-Honeycombs area. Stocking in Idaho above Three Forks on the Owyhee Rivers has also been highly successful. Reintroductions are being considered for the Upper Owyhee River Canyon, Trout Creek Mountains, and the Sheepshead Mountains. Bighorn sheep generally occupy areas unsuitable for livestock and do not conflict with livestock use. Bighorn habitat would be adequately protected through the protection features of wilderness and ACECs.

**Water Development and Land Treatments.** Water developments (predominantly for livestock) have allowed wildlife to expand into previously marginal habitat. All the alternatives would provide developments for critical drinking water for upland game birds such as the chuckar partridge and sagegrouse, as well as many other game and non-game animals. Seedings and brush controls are beneficial to some wildlife species (i.e., antelope). In Alternatives B, C, and D, land treatments would be restricted to preserve critical wildlife habitats in riparian zones. In Alternatives C and D, habitat diversity would be maximized through water developments and vegetative management. Of critical importance is the protection of existing key antelope, sagegrouse, and mule deer ranges.





0 5 10 MILES



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
VALE DISTRICT

### MAP 5

#### Riparian Area Protection

- Alternatives B, C, & D
- Alternatives C & D
- Alternative D







# RECREATION PROGRAM

Fishing, hunting, sightseeing, camping, hiking and float boating attract approximately 480,000 visitor days use in the area each year. Owyhee River floating attracted 2,053 people for about 12,000 visitor days in 1982.

The intensity of recreation management, including recreation facilities development, varies under each of the four alternatives shown in Table 6. The various levels shown are designed to be commensurate with the production of commodity resources on one hand and the protection and enhancement of natural values, such as scenic quality, on the other. In the Northern Resource Area, only those program activities which could impact forage allocations, ACECs, or WSAs are listed in Table 6.

**Hunting.** Hunting is a major recreational activity in the resource areas. In Alternatives A and B habitat management that will enhance the production of big-game animals and sport fish is emphasized. In Alternatives C and D emphasis is towards management practices and developments that would maintain or increase a diversity of wildlife types for game and non-game species. The wildlife section discusses the different levels of habitat diversity under each alternative.

**Fishing.** All the alternatives provide for varying levels of livestock grazing restriction or exclusion to protect and/or improve riparian zones and fish habitat. The wildlife section describes the different riparian management proposals. An accompanying map depicts the location of riparian zones in streams that would be protected under each alternative.

Habitat protection and the enhancement of wild, native fishes, particularly trout, is emphasized in all the alternatives but to a greater degree in Alternatives C and D. BLM would encourage the State to stock rainbow and red-band trout and warm-water fish in reservoirs where native trout habitat would not be affected.

**Visual Resource Management (VRM).** Activities conducted by the Bureau of Land Management often involve alterations of the landscape. Since one of the major components of a quality environment is its appearance and because public lands have scenic value, it is essential to perform management activities in a manner that will achieve desired results. This is accomplished through the Visual Resource Management system. Each VRM class places certain restrictions on management activities and the degree of change that is acceptable within a characteristic landscape. The areas to be managed in each VRM class are shown in Table 7 by alternative. A brief description of VRM management goals is presented below:

**Class I** - To be managed for ecological change only, as mandated by other program legislation or policy establishing the area.

**Class II** - To be managed so developments should not be evident to the casual observer. All project design elements should blend with natural features of the characteristic landscapes.

**Class III** - To be managed so developments may be evident to the casual observer. Developments should be subordinate in scale to the observed landscape and should blend with natural features of the characteristic landscape.

**Class IV** - To be managed so developments may be evident to the casual observer. Developments may be dominant in scale to the viewed landscape, but should still blend with natural features of the characteristic landscape.

**Class V** - An interim designation for disturbed areas needing rehabilitation to the VRM class goals of the adjoining land.



Table 6

**RECREATION MANAGEMENT****Recreation  
Opportunity****Alternatives****Owyhee River  
(Northern & Southern  
Resource Areas)****Alternative A**

Do not designate the Owyhee River as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Manage to maximize visitor use by providing a wide range of readily accessible water-oriented recreational opportunities including more elaborate and more numerous facilities. The river corridor would not be closed to ORV use, livestock grazing or mineral activities. Present State Scenic Waterways guidelines would be considered in the management.

**Alternative B**

Designate the Owyhee River as a "Recreational River Area" for inclusion into the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Restrict the range of recreational opportunities and the degree of facility development. Maintain or improve existing access and limit ORV vehicles to existing roads and trails. Continue mining and livestock grazing, but modify so activities do not degrade natural and cultural values.

**Alternative C**

Designate the Owyhee River as "Scenic" for inclusion into the National Wild and Scenic Rivers system. Manage the river corridor to maintain and enhance its natural qualities, limiting access and facility development to accommodate use of float-boats. Accommodate only other uses which are compatible with the natural values of the corridor.

**Alternative D**

Designate the Owyhee River as "Wild" for inclusion into the National Wild and Scenic Rivers system. Manage the river corridor to preserve its wilderness character. Visitor use activities and facility development would be limited to preserve the wilderness resource and the visitor's wilderness (float-boating) experience. Livestock grazing and mining would be excluded from the river corridor.

**Recreation Sites****Alternative A**

Improve campground facilities at Cow Lakes and Antelope Reservoir. Develop campground facilities at Owyhee Spring, Bone Creek, Dawson and Jeff's Reservoir. Construct Overnight Campground facilities within the Saddle Butte Lower Lava field. Construct hunter camps within high use big-game hunting areas. Construct boating and campground facilities at Three Forks and at Hole-In-The-Ground on the Owyhee River.

Continue present management of Leslie Gulch, Snively Hot Springs, and Twin Springs campgrounds.

**Alternative B**

Same as Alternative A, except that campground improvements or new campground facilities would not exceed minimum fee collecting standards. Proposed big-game hunting camps would be limited to a level of development necessary to protect the wilderness resource and to protect the health and safety of visitors.



**Alternative C**

Same as Alternative B, except facilities on the Owyhee River would be developed to accomodate the float-boating public only. Facilities within the Saddle Butte Lower Field would be reduced to parking and primitive facilities.

Fully develop Leslie Gulch, Snively Hot Springs, and Twin Springs recreation sites and exclude livestock grazing.

**Alternative D**

Developments on the Owyhee River would be restricted to those consistant with Wild and Scenic Rivers designation. Access and facility development at Hole-In-The-Ground would be eliminated, requiring river users to use the Leslie Gulch boat launch for take out. Other campground developments would remain at the same level as Alternative B.

Additional developments in Leslie Gulch, Snively Hot Springs and Twin Springs would also be restricted and exclude livestock grazing.

**ORV Open Area****Alternative A**

Open all public lands within the resource area to ORV use.

**Alternative B**

Limit use of ORVs on all public lands to existing roads and trails within WSAs, ACECs, RNAs and riparian zones.

**Alternative C**

Limit use on all public lands within the resource area to existing roads and trails within big-game wintering areas, riparian zones, wild horse management areas, WSAs, ACECs, and RNAs.

**Alternative D**

Same as Alternative C, except exclude ORV use from all perennial streams.

**Petrified Wood  
Collection (McDermitt  
area)****Alternative A**

Offer petrified wood areas for public sale at fair market values, reseed rehabilitated areas for maximum livestock forage production.

**Alternative B**

Same as Alternative A

**Alternative C**

Designate Petrified wood collecting area and rehabilitate as necessary to reduce hazards.

**Alternative D**

Close area to further collecting. Reseed rehabilitated areas to enhance wildlife.



Table 7

**VISUAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES****VRM CLASS****Alternative A**

- I. No special management restrictions.
- II. No special management restrictions.
- III. No special management restrictions.
- IV. No special management restrictions.
- V. Rehabilitate disturbed sites in Class II areas along U.S. Highway 95 and State Highway 78 when mineral materials are depleted and if no longer needed for aggregate stockpiling.

**Alternative B**

- I. No special management restrictions.
- II. Manage all VRM Class II lands along U.S. Highways 20 (between Vale and Juntura) and 95, State Highway 78, and along the Owyhee River State Scenic Waterway above the Owyhee Reservoir.
- III. Manage all VRM Class III lands along U.S. Highways 20 and 95, State Highway 78, Owyhee River State Scenic Waterway.
- IV. Manage all VRM Class IV lands along U.S. Highways 20 and 95, State Highway 78 and the Owyhee River State Scenic Waterway.
- V. Rehabilitate disturbed sites in VRM Class IV areas along U.S. Highways 20 and 95 and State Highway 78 when mineral materials are depleted and if no longer needed for aggregate stockpiling. Also manage Class IV lands along the Owyhee River State Scenic Waterway.

**Alternative C**

- I. Manage the Jordan Craters NRA as VRM Class I lands. (34,130 acres).
- II. Manage all VRM Class II lands along U.S. Highways 20 and 95, State Highway 78, major county roads Succor Creek State Park, the Owyhee River and Three Fingers and Negro Rock landmarks.
- III. Manage all VRM Class III lands along U.S. Highways 20 and 95, State Highway 78, major county roads, Succor Creek State Park, the Owyhee River and Three Fingers and Negro Rock landmarks.
- IV. Same as III.
- V. Rehabilitate disturbed sites in VRM Class II and III areas along U.S. Highways 20 and 95, and State Highway 78, major county roads, and along the Owyhee River. When mineral materials are depleted and if no longer needed for aggregate stockpiling.

**Alternative D**

- I. Manage the Jordan Craters as VRM Class I lands (34,130 acres)
- II. Manage all VRM Class II lands along U.S. Highways 20 and 95, State Highway 78, Succor Creek State Park, all county roads, the Owyhee River and Reservoir, Leslie Gulch, Honeycombs, major BLM roads, Three-Fingers Rock and Negro Rock landmarks Little Owyhee River (Louse Canyon) and White Horse Basin.
- III. Same as Class II
- IV. Same as Class III
- V. Rehabilitate disturbed sites in VRM Class II and III lands.



## MINERALS PROGRAM

The current national emphasis is toward encouragement of domestic energy and mineral exploration and development. Management of locatable and leasable minerals involves encouraging the development of minerals to serve national needs while protecting other resource values. Development of energy minerals namely uranium, geothermal heat, and oil and gas, is a matter of high interest in this area.

There are about 87 lease applications and 388 leases for oil and gas and 95 leases for geothermal energy for the area. Nine thousand one hundred and thirty one mining claims are on file.

In the minerals program, minerals resources are classified into three major categories--locatable, leasable and saleable--according to the laws governing their means of disposal. All the alternatives have a similar purpose, in keeping public lands open for the exploration, development or collection of mineral resources, while maintaining natural systems and protecting sensitive or critical areas.

Existing mineral withdrawals and segregations are currently being reviewed and revoked in cases where they are no longer necessary. In addition, public land reality actions, such as exchange or land classifications, no longer include withdrawals or segregations of locatable or leasable minerals.

### Locatable Minerals

Locatable minerals include gold, silver, uranium and others that can be staked and claimed under the general mining law of 1872, as amended. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) amended the 1872 mining law by requiring that all mining activities, including access, must be carried out in a manner that prevents unnecessary or value degradation. All roads constructed whether under a Notice of Intent or Plan of Operation, are required to be reclaimed by the operators.

In this regard, all alternatives encourage the use of existing access to the greatest extent possible. Currently there are 9,131 mining claims in the resource areas. In Alternatives B, C and D, restrictions or exclusions of exploration or mining operations could take place in Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs), Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs), and existing and proposed Research Natural Areas (RNAs).

### Leasable Minerals

Leasable minerals include oil and gas, geothermal, sodium, and potassium. Each alternative provides for the development of existing lease areas and opportunities for new leases, subject to BLM review and approval on a case-by-case basis. Most of the Southern and Northern Malheur Resource Areas would remain open to leasing. At present, 1,208,646 acres of public land are under application for oil and

gas leasing. Geothermal leases or leasing actions (applications for competitive sales) involve about 160,707 acres.

In Alternatives B, C and D, mineral lease restrictions or exclusions could occur as a result of conflicts between exploration/development operations and other resource values identified in WSAs, ACECs, RNAs, riparian zones, wildlife habitat areas, and visually sensitive areas.

Three basic leasing options would be considered for identified areas:

1. No leasing.
2. Lease with no surface occupancy stipulations.
3. Lease with limited surface occupancy stipulations.

### Saleable Materials

Saleable minerals include common varieties of sand, gravel, stone, pumice, cinder and clay. Materials are sold from designated areas upon request by interested individuals. Free use permits are issued to the Oregon State Highway Department and to Malheur County without limitation as to the number of permits or the values of mineral materials to be extracted or removed. In Alternatives B, C and D, no new pits would be established in WSAs or protected areas. Established pits, once depleted, would be rehabilitated to visual resource management standards (see Table 6 discussion for recreation management).

## CULTURAL AND BOTANICAL PROGRAMS

Relevant and important natural, cultural, historic, fisheries and wildlife resources need protection from human disturbances. Six Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (Acecs) have been proposed to protect the natural character of scenic, animal and plant values contained within for scientific study.

**Cultural.** All of the land use alternatives would protect known cultural resources. In addition, BLM would continue to conduct inventories and clearance surveys in advance of projects to ensure that significant archaeological and historic resources are not affected. Where conflicts occur between known cultural sites and proposed projects, BLM would follow procedures prescribed by laws and regulations to avoid unnecessary loss of these values.

**Botanical.** Present known or suspected habitats of sensitive, threatened and endangered (S, T & E) plants of Federal and State concern would be protected under all four alternatives. To identify any potential impacts on S, T & E plants, BLM would continue to conduct surveys before any ground disturbing activity takes place. In addition, inventories would be conducted to further define population boundaries, essential habitat, and the distribution and abundance of plants of special concern:



# SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREAS

## Areas of Critical Environmental Concern.

Six potential Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) have been identified the planning area. In Alternative A, none of the areas would be designated as ACECs. In Alternatives B, C and D all six areas would be designated, with three areas varying in size among the alternatives. Grazing will be allowed in Alternatives B, C, and D. Table 8 shows the potential ACECs by alternative. Map 6 shows the location of each potential ACEC. A brief description of the outstanding characteristics and special management attention required to prevent damage to the special values of each ACEC follows.

**Honeycombs.** This potential ACEC is located in the Northern Malheur Resource Area.

Scenic Geology - High scenic values are derived from unusual geologic rock outcroppings and colorful volcanic soils. The volcanic outcrops are massive and literally honeycombed with holes created by wind and water erosion.

Plant Diversity - A diversity of plants occur throughout the ACEC including three federally-listed sensitive species. This area fills one plant community cell of the Oregon Natural Heritage Program.

Fragile Soils - The soils are derived from volcanic ash and are highly sensitive to physical damage from surface-disturbing activities, including ORV use.

Unique Animals - This ACEC provides one of only five areas in the State of Oregon where reintroduced California bighorn sheep can be harvested. Disturbance from unregulated human access to the area would have an adverse effect on sheep habitat values.

Proposed special management to protect these values will require: maintain the current ORV closure and post road signs to deter off-road travel.

Take appropriate action to secure a protective withdrawal from land use entry, including mining, or prohibit land use actions of a surface-disturbing nature.

**Leslie Gulch.** This potential ACEC is located in the Northern Malheur Resource Area.

Scenic Geology - The volcanic rock and ash deposits are highly unusual in conformation and color, making the area distinctive and unusual in physical appearance in comparison to other areas of similar volcanic origin.

Shallow-Fragile Soils - The soils are of volcanic ash derivation and are droughty and highly erosive when the protective vegetative cover is disturbed.

Plant Diversity - A diversity of plants occur throughout the ACEC including two federally listed sensitive plants that are considered endemic as they are limited in North America to volcanic ash deposits.

California Bighorn Sheep - The area is currently stocked with reintroduced bighorn sheep.

Proposed special management to protect these values includes:

Maintain current ORV closed designations and post road signs to deter off-road travel.

Pursue land use entry withdrawal, including mining, or prohibit land use actions of a surface-disturbing nature.

Table 8

## POTENTIAL AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

Unit Names	Alternatives (acres)			
	A	B	C	D
Honeycombs	0	11,930	11,930	11,930
Leslie Gulch	0	8,500 <sup>1</sup>	9,300	9,300
Owyhee River	0	30,400 <sup>2</sup>	30,400 <sup>2</sup>	30,400 <sup>2</sup>
Jordan Craters	0	3,800 <sup>3</sup>	36,830 <sup>4</sup>	36,830 <sup>4</sup>
Saddle Butte Lava Tubes	0	6,400	6,400	6,400
Whitehorse Basin	0	980 <sup>5</sup>	1,300	90,000
Total	0	62,010	96,160	184,860

<sup>1</sup> Excludes approximately 800 acres for spring and pipeline development.

<sup>2</sup> Northern Malheur Resource Area approximately 2,600 acres, Southern Malheur Resource Area 27,800 acres.

<sup>3</sup> Excludes 33,030 acres for range improvements, mineral development, and land disposal action.

<sup>4</sup> Northern Malheur Resource Area approximately 2,700 acres, Southern Malheur Resource Area 34,130 acres.

<sup>5</sup> Excludes 320 acres for mineral development and transportation and utility corridors.



**Owyhee River.** This potential ACEC is located in the Northern and Southern Malheur Resource Areas.

Wild and Scenic River Values - The Owyhee River has been nominated for wild and scenic river designation due to the free-flowing nature of the river and the scenic geology of the river breaks.

Cultural Values - Consist mainly of petroglyphs, rock shelters, caves and artifacts.

Historical values - Buildings, waterwheels, and whiskey stills date to early settlement of the area.

Plant Diversity - A diversity of plants occur throughout the ACEC including four federally-listed sensitive species.

Proposed special management to protect these values will require:

Special studies to determine the carrying capacity of the river in order to prevent damage to sensitive plants, fish and wildlife, and their habitat.

Maintain the current ORV closure in the Northern Malheur Resource Area and take appropriate action in the Southern Malheur Resource Area in regard to ORV use. Erect barriers and post signs to deter off road use.

Continue the practice of river patrol during high use periods to monitor use and prevent overuse which may damage sensitive plants, cultural and historic sites and scenic geology.

**Jordan Craters** - This potential ACEC is located in the Northern and Southern Malheur Resource Areas.

Plant and Animal Diversity - A diversity of unusual plants and animals and pristine native vegetative occur throughout the ACEC due to impounded water, lava caves, contraction cracks, and the "edge effect" created by the pattern of lava flows. Three plant community cell needs are partially filled in this area. Two federally-listed animal species inhabit the area.

Scenic/Geologic Values - The recent geologic age of lava flows mixed with older flows, as in the Clark's Butte addition, provide an excellent opportunity for scientific study. The presence of several types of lava formations, craters, spatter cones, gutters, kipukas, lava dams, tube caves and contraction cracks provide high quality scenic values in the area.

Proposed special management to protect these values will require:

Appropriate action to amend the existing Jordan Craters RNA to include the Clarks Butte addition.

Initiate protective withdrawal action to protect the special values from mining activities in the event future discoveries are made of known locatable minerals of value.

Provide interim protection from any surface disturbing activities pending withdrawal and RNA designations.

**Saddle Butte.** This potential ACEC is located in the Southern Malheur Resource Area. It contains the following resource values that will require special management attention:

Natural Systems - Currently over 8 miles of lava tubes have been surveyed within the area. The tubes have collapsed into trenches, for the most part leaving only short segments intact, of which 18 are accessible to some extent to permit scientific exploration. To date only six of these caves have been surveyed and studied to any extent.

The entire ACEC, including the uncollapsed tube segments, is extremely hazardous due to the propensity to collapse.

Special management attention required to protect the natural system from accelerated erosion and to assure human safety will require:

Maintain roads and ways sufficient only to manage the land and resources. Construct no roads that will singly serve to increase access to the ACEC.

Take appropriate action to secure withdrawal from land use entry, including mining.

Pending withdrawal, prevent surface-disturbing actions that will accelerate natural erosion of the tubes.

**Whitehorse Basin.** This potential ACEC is located in the Southern Malheur Resource Area. It contains the only known habitat for Whitehorse cutthroat trout which is a federally-listed sensitive species. The trout is particularly adapted to the harsh desert environment and its gene pool should be preserved to restock habitat elsewhere.

The following special management attention is required to preserve this value:

Control and/or prevent livestock grazing in critical riparian habitat until vegetation is established and can be maintained.

Remove barriers to fish passage.

Plant fish in suitable habitat.

Construct pool habitat.



Augment stream flow.

Acquire private land critical to habitat protection.

Maintain existing habitat by vegetative manipulation for cover and shade. Monitor to determine condition and trend of habitat and population.

Livestock grazing would be limited in Alternatives B, C and D in order to permit riparian vegetation to develop and/or recover to a maintenance status. Mining and certain range improvements would be limited in Alternatives C and D.

## Research Natural Areas

Research Natural Areas (RNAs) are areas that are preserved in their natural condition for scientific and educational values. RNAs serve the following purposes:

Provide areas to study the effect of human activities in similar environments.

Provide sites to study plants and animals in an undisturbed condition.

Provide preserves for key plant and animal species, particularly the sensitive species.

The Oregon Natural Heritage Program has identified cell needs which need to be represented in a State Natural Areas program. Cells are certain plant communities or plant habitats.

Staff specialists and interested members of the public have identified three potential RNAs and an addition to one existing designated RNA. Two potential RNAs are located in each Resource Area.

In Alternative A, no RNAs would be designated since this would be inconsistent with the goal and priority of the objectives. Two RNAs would be designated in Alternative B as there are no conflicts with the other resources or the goal and priorities of the objectives. All four RNAs would be designated in Alternatives C and D. Table 9 and Map 6 show the RNAs for each Alternative.

Table 9

### RESEARCH NATURAL AREAS (RNAs)

Unit Names	Alternatives (acres)			
	A	B	C	D
Honeycombs	0	0	11,930	11,930
Mahogany Ridge	0	0	320	320
Stockade	0	560	640	640
Jordan Craters	0	37,470 <sup>1</sup>	37,470 <sup>1</sup>	37,470 <sup>1</sup>
Total	0	38,030	50,360	50,360

The following section briefly describes the values and management needs of each RNA.

**Honeycombs RNA.** This proposed 11,930 acre RNA is in the Northern Malheur Resource Area. It includes the main portion of the honeycombs geologic formation adjacent to the Owyhee Reservoir in the breaks of the Owyhee River Canyon. The area contains big sagebrush/needle and thread grass on cinders cell. The community is extensive and in good natural condition.

The area contains two federally-listed sensitive plant species, and provides habitat for the reintroduced California bighorn sheep. The rock formations represent a concentration of erosional processes of volcanic tuffs.

This RNA is recommended for designation in Alternatives C and D.

**Mahogany Ridge RNA.** This proposed 320 acre RNA is located in the Northern Resource Area. It includes a natural undisturbed stand of mountain mahogany trees on Mahogany Ridge. It fills the cell need for mountain mahogany-sagebrush and mountain mahogany-Oregon grape complex. The area supports the most extensive stand of mountain mahogany in Oregon.

The RNA will be recommended for designation in Alternatives C and D. Management would require elimination of livestock grazing in the stands.

**Stockade Mountain RNA.** This proposed 640 acre RNA is located in the Stockade Mountains of the Southern Malheur Resource Area. Four cell needs can possibly be filled:

Western juniper/big sagebrush/blue bunch wheat grass,

Western juniper/Idaho fescue/big sagebrush,

Western juniper/blue bunch wheatgrass/big sagebrush,

Low sagebrush/bluebunch wheat grass.

<sup>1</sup> This includes the existing Jordan Craters RNA which covers 31,390 acres.





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### MAP 6

#### Special Management Areas

- Research Natural Areas (RNA)
- Alternative B
  - Alternatives C & D
- Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)
- Alternative B
  - Alternative C
  - Alternative D
  - Alternatives C & D







The juniper is old growth in scattered to dense stands. The area is lightly grazed and in good condition.

Approximately 650 acres will be recommended for designation in Alternative B and the entire area will be recommended for designation in Alternatives C and D. Approximately 80 acres will be seeded for a range improvement in alternative B.

**Jordan Craters and Addition RNA.** Approximately 31,390 acres is currently designated a RNA. The proposed addition involves Clark's Butte and Lava Butte, adding an additional 5,440 acres to the total proposed Jordon Craters RNA of 36,830 acres. Approximately 2,700 acres of the designated RNA is in the Northern Malheur Resource Area. The balance of the designated portion and all of the proposed addition is in the Southern Malheur Resource Area.

Inclusion of the addition will increase the scope of scientific study of multiages of lava flows and the sequence of vegetative succession. The Lava Butte flow is estimated to be in excess of 30,000-years old a compared with the Jordan Craters flow of about 9,000 years. The flow in the Clark's Butte addition (about 100 years ago) may be the youngest flow in Oregon.

The proposed addition will fill the high priority threetip/sagebrush/bunchgrass cell need. The current boundaries include partial representations of the silver sage and riparian vegetation communities.

The entire current RNA and proposed addition is included in Alternatives B, C, and D.

## WILD HORSE PROGRAM

There are 13 Herd Areas (HAs) in the planning area. The original Alvord/Barren Valley/Sheepshead HA is being considered in the Southern Malheur Resource Area MFP as well as three additional herd areas, Sand Springs, Coyote Lakes, and Sheepshead. Table 10 lists the herd areas and allocations for each alternative. Map 7 shows the location of the herd areas.

Alternative A would not provide forage allocations for wildhorses, thereby allowing maximum livestock production.

As the result of prior management decisions, Atturbury, Cottonwood Basin, Morger and Stockade HAs are not currently stocked. In keeping with the goal and priority of the objectives of each alternative, no allocations will be made for these HAs except Alternative D.

Alternative B would allow wild horses to share surplus forage equally with livestock in Potholes, Basque, Cold Springs, Cottonwood Creek, Sand Springs, Sheepshead and Coyote Lake HAs as long as the demand for livestock and wildlife forage can otherwise be met. Jackies Butte and Three Fingers HAs would not receive an allocation of forage due to conflicts with livestock grazing.

Table 10

### WILD HORSE HERD MANAGEMENT

Herd Areas (HAs)	Prior MFP Decision <sup>1</sup>		Present <sup>2</sup>		A		B		C		D	
	Number of Horses	AUMs	Number of Horses	AUMs	Number of Horses	AUMs	Number of Horses	AUMs	Number of Horses	AUMs	Number of Horses	AUMs
Potholes	21	252	20	240	0	0	45	540	90	1,080	0	0
Basque	37	444	38	456	0	0	55	660	110	1,320	0	0
Three-Fingers	150	1,800	220	2,640	0	0	0	0	380	6,214	330	5,630
Cold Springs	130	1,560	167	2,004	9	9	140	1,680	200	3,386	200	3,386
Cottonwood Creek	70	840	64	768	0	0	90	1,080	120	2,245	120	2,245
Atturbury <sup>3</sup>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	60	833
Cottonwood Basin <sup>3</sup>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	55	833
Jackies Butte	150	180	215	2,580	0	0	0	0	1,167	14,004	1,838	22,055
Sand Springs <sup>4</sup>	N/A	N/A	260	3,120	0	0	342	4,104	684	8,208	1,166	13,991
Coyote Lake <sup>4</sup>	N/A	N/A	162	1,944	0	0	360	4,321	720	8,640	1,226	14,711
Sheepshead <sup>4</sup>	N/A	N/A	385	4,620	0	0	198	2,376	396	4,752	674	8,089
Morger <sup>3</sup>	N/A	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	68	815
Stockade <sup>3</sup>	N/A	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	171	2,183
	N/A	N/A	1,467	18,372	0	0	1,230	14,761	3,867	49,849	5,908	81,662

<sup>1</sup> Levels approved in 1975 by MFP decision.

<sup>2</sup> Estimated 1982 numbers from aerial census.

<sup>3</sup> Management decision is not to stock these HAs due to private ownership conflicts with fences, lack of water and winter forage.

<sup>4</sup> Originally part of the Alvord/Barren Valley/Sheepshead HA. (The above computations are summarized for the original HA as follows: Alternative B: 900 horses and 10,801 AUMs; Alternative C: 1,800 horses and 21,600 AUMs; Alternative D: 3,066 horses and 36,791 AUMs.)



Alternative C allocates all surplus forage to wild horses in the stocked HAs. Alternative D excludes all livestock in existing HAs. Horse and livestock grazing is excluded for riparian values in some areas.

Domestic horse grazing is restricted in all HAs under all the alternatives. Alternative D also restricts domestic horse grazing in contiguous allotments.

All the alternatives would allow management practices to improve herd stock in HAs. Such management practices would upgrade herds through transfer of superior wild studs or through release of domestic stallions if the need arises. Transfer of animals between herds would also be permitted to prevent line breeding or inbreeding.

Selection for sex, color, breed conformation and physical condition would also be used as a management tool for improving wild horse herds. A vigorous and periodic gathering program would be maintained under all the alternatives to maintain herds within proper stocking levels commensurate with forage allocation and production.

Various range improvements are planned in all the alternatives. Those that conflict with wild horse grazing will be restricted depending on the alternative. Fences restrict the movement of wild horses, therefore, none would be constructed under Alternatives C and D. All existing fences would be removed under Alternative D in all 13 HAs. In addition, the fence separating Morger and Stockade HAs in the Southern Malheur Resource Area would be removed to allow maximum development of the herds.

Brush control generally benefits wild horses by increasing forage production. Brush control is planned strictly for the benefit of wild horses in the Southern Malheur Resource Area under Alternatives B, C and D. One control area is planned in the Jackies Butte HA under Alternatives C and D, and six areas are planned under Alternative B for the Sheepshead and Sand Springs HAs. Due to conflicts with wilderness, only a portion of one brush control will be allowed under Alternatives C and D for these HAs.

## SOILS AND WATERSHED PROGRAM

Management practices in all four alternatives would be designed to protect water quality, soil productivity and control erosion. Proposed projects, including roads, would be designed and maintained to reduce impacts on water quality and soil erosion. All alternatives would meet the minimum legal requirements dealing with water quality.

In Alternative A, Allotment Management Plans (AMPs) would be written to maximize livestock benefits through vegetation manipulation, including brush controls and seedings. Stock grazing would continue on all open suitable ranges, being restricted only in existing fenced riparian zones.

In Alternatives B and C, livestock grazing would be further restricted in those pastures containing perennial streams and excluded from existing fenced riparian zones. In Alternative D, livestock grazing would be excluded from pastures containing perennial streams but limited use would be allowed in other riparian zones.

ORV use would be restricted in Alternatives B and C, from specific areas including all WSAs, ACECs and RNAs. Additionally, in Alternative D, ORV use would be totally excluded from the riparian zones of all perennial streams. Table 3 and Map 5 show the location and miles of stream to be protected under each alternative.

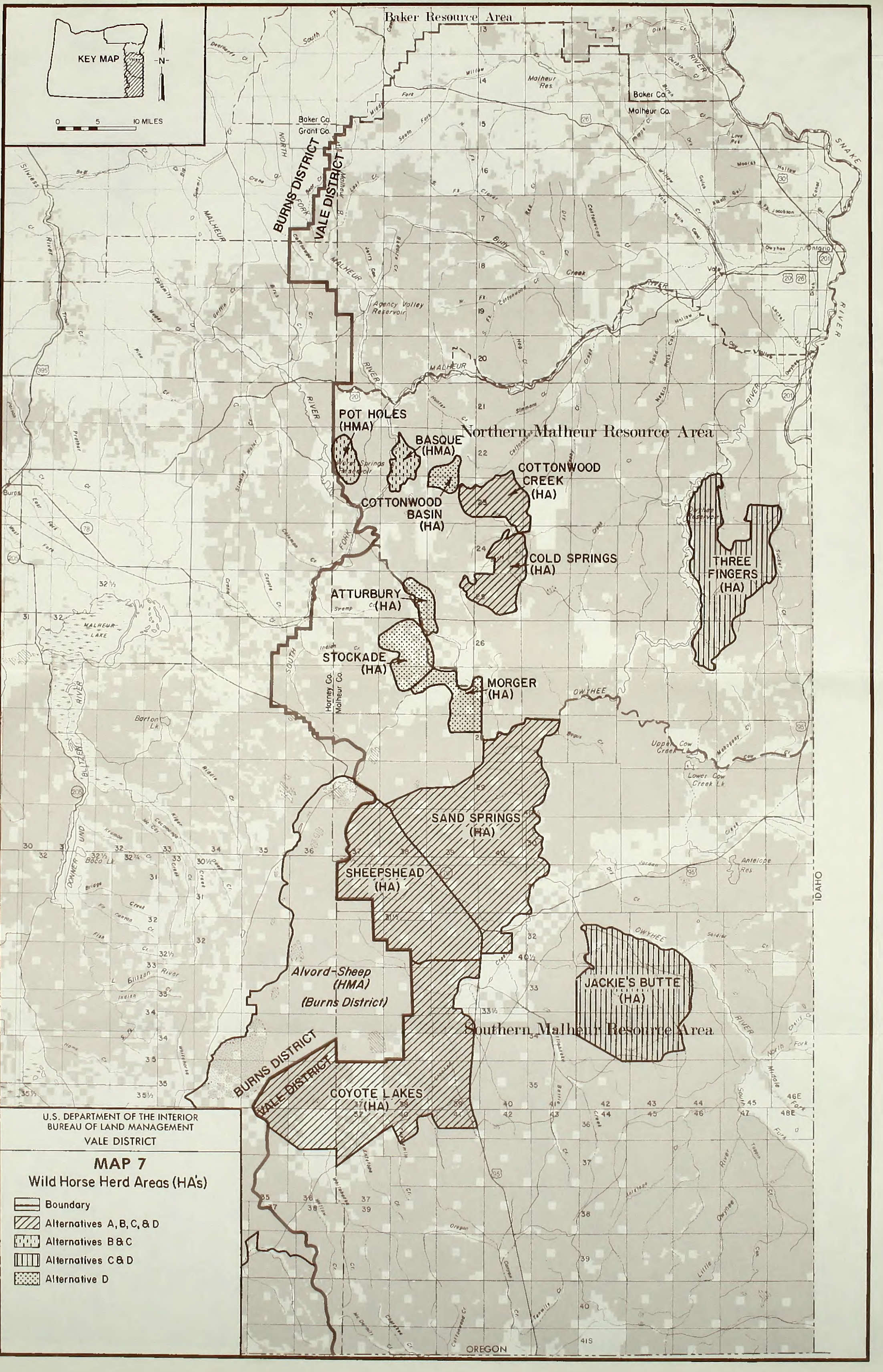
## LANDS PROGRAM

The lands program includes actions involving: land disposals for residential, commercial, industrial and agricultural development or expansion (by sale); opportunities for rights-of-way including multiple-use and single-use utility/transportation corridors, communication sites, roads, materials sites, etc.; land use exchanges to consolidate federal ownership; and land use authorization/permits/leases to authorize use occupancy and development of public lands.

**Land Exchanges.** Land exchanges with State, local and private governments would occur under all alternatives when these exchanges are considered to be in the public interest. Land disposals through any means, including public sales, exchanges, agricultural leases, etc., would not be allowed in WSAs unless a vested right was established prior to October 21, 1976 (passage of FLPMA). If Congress designates a WSA as wilderness, the lands therein would be managed under the provisions of the Wilderness Act, which also disallows any land disposals except where vested rights have been established.

Alternative A would provide for the exchange or sale of isolated BLM parcels and the acquisition of easements to enhance the range, wildlife and recreation programs, if these land actions can be made without hindering local development or expansion.











Alternatives B, C and D do not allow land disposals in WSAs except when BLM receives lands within an area under wilderness review in exchange for public lands that are not under wilderness review. This procedure would also apply to ACECs, RNAs or high valued wildlife habitat areas including riparian zones. Necessary access (easements) across private land would be obtained and in special instances scenic easements would be acquired to maintain existing scenic quality, such as in the Owyhee River corridor.

Alternatives C and D would allow disposal of lands only if they are considered to be of low value, contributing little to existing or potential management opportunities for the respective resource programs.

**Existing Utility and Transportation Corridors.** Two different corridor types are identified for the resource area. These are the multiple-use, utility-transportation and single-use, utility-transportation corridors which are presently in operation. These would become designated corridors in all the alternatives.

Existing multi-use, utility-transportation corridors will allow many different types of lineal rights-of-way to be located within the single corridor route. Examples of lineal rights-of-way may include highways and roads, power transmission and/or distribution lines, pipelines, and telephone lines. Limitations could be imposed on any new right-of-way use depending upon its impact on cultural and natural resource values within the corridor route.

Major multiple use and single use energy corridors are shown on Map 8. Existing multiple-use, utility-transportation corridors within the Southern Malheur Resource Area are as follows:

1. U.S. Highway 95 (Oregon-Idaho to Nevada State line),
2. Oregon State Highway 78 (Harney County to Burns Junction),
3. Folly Farms - Crowley,
4. South Fork of Malheur River (Malheur Cave -Venator),
5. Venator - Riverside (McRae Homestead),
6. Fields - Twelvemile Ranch,
7. Soldier Creek Road (U.S. Highway 95 to Little Grassy Reservoir),
8. Three Forks - Oregon/Idaho State line.

Existing single-use, utility-transportation corridors allow nine single types of lineal rights-of-way to be located within a single corridor route rather than a combination of several different uses as discussed in the previous section.

Generally speaking, these kinds of corridors would be for cross-country power transmission lines, pipelines or county, state or federal transportation routes (roads and highways). Limitations on new corridors would be the same as for the multiple-use, utility-transportation corridor. Existing single-use, utility-transportation corridors are as follows:

1. U.S. Highway 95 - Twelvemile Ranch Road (transportation),
2. Star Valey Road (transportation),
3. Cow Lakes Road (transportation),
4. Soldier Creek Road (transportation),
5. Harney Electric Cooperative Line (Alvord Lake-McDermitt).

Existing multiple-use and single-use corridors also traverse the Northern Malheur Resource Area. They were adequately addressed in the Northern Malheur MFP and therefore will not be discussed in this amendment.

The major corridors shown on Map 8 provide continuity of location throughout the planning area.

**Proposed Utility Corridors** (Western Regional Corridor Study, May 1980)

**1. Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) Power Transmission Line (east-west route).** The proposed power transmission line would enter Oregon from the east near where the Owyhee River enters the planning area on the Oregon-Idaho state line and leave the planning area west of the Whitehorse Ranch. The proposed power line would be used to transmit electricity (500 KV) from generation facilities in the Rocky Mountain states to load centers in the Pacific Northwest. Since this transmission facility is being considered in the alternatives for the east-west Pacific Power and Light Company power transmission line through the same general area, it will not be duplicated.

**2. Pacific Power and Light (PP&L) Company Power Transmission Line (East-West Route).** The proposed power transmission line would enter Oregon from the east approximately 8 miles south of Jordan Valley and traverse the planning area to Rome and then westward to leave the planning area just north of the Whitehorse Ranch. The proposed powerline would be used to transmit electricity (500 KV) from generation facilities in the Rocky Mountain States to load centers in the Pacific Northwest. This proposal is accepted in part under Alternatives A and B. The route would have to be modified where it enters Oregon from the east to avoid the Bruneau Dunes State Park, a USAF bombing range and the Boulder Creek Special Recreation Area in Idaho, Antelope Reservoir and the town of Jordan Valley in Oregon. The route would remain unchanged where it crosses the state scenic waterway at Rome (Owyhee River) and westward where it leaves the resource area.

In this alternative, it would be possible to combine the proposed BPA corridor with the PP&L proposed corridor. The corridor would have to be modified slightly to avoid WSAs 2-74F (Alvord) southern extremity. In Alternative D, the proposed corridor would be rejected in its entirety due to conflicts with the enlarged Alvord WSA.



**3. Bonneville Power Administration Power Transmission Line (north-south route).** The proposed power transmission line would enter Oregon from the south near McDermitt and traverse the planning area to Burns Junction and north to the Clark Ranch. The proposed powerline would be used to transmit electricity (133 KV to 500 KV) from geothermal generation facilities in central and northern Nevada to load centers in the Pacific Northwest. The transmission powerline would tie into an existing power grid network and would parallel existing right-of-way corridors where practicable. At some future date, there is a possibility that the Northwest Pipeline Corporation will construct a natural gas pipeline through the planning area along the same proposed corridor route. The BPA's proposal is accepted in Alternatives A and B with slight modifications to avoid several small airstrips and the Federal Aviation Administration's VORTAC site at the paved airstrip south of Burns Junction. In Alternative C the proposed route conflicts with WSAs 3-110 (Lower Owyhee River Canyon) and 3-111 (Saddle Butte). In Alternative D, an additional conflict involves WSA 3-118 (Bowden Hills). This proposal would, therefore, be rejected in both Alternatives C and D.

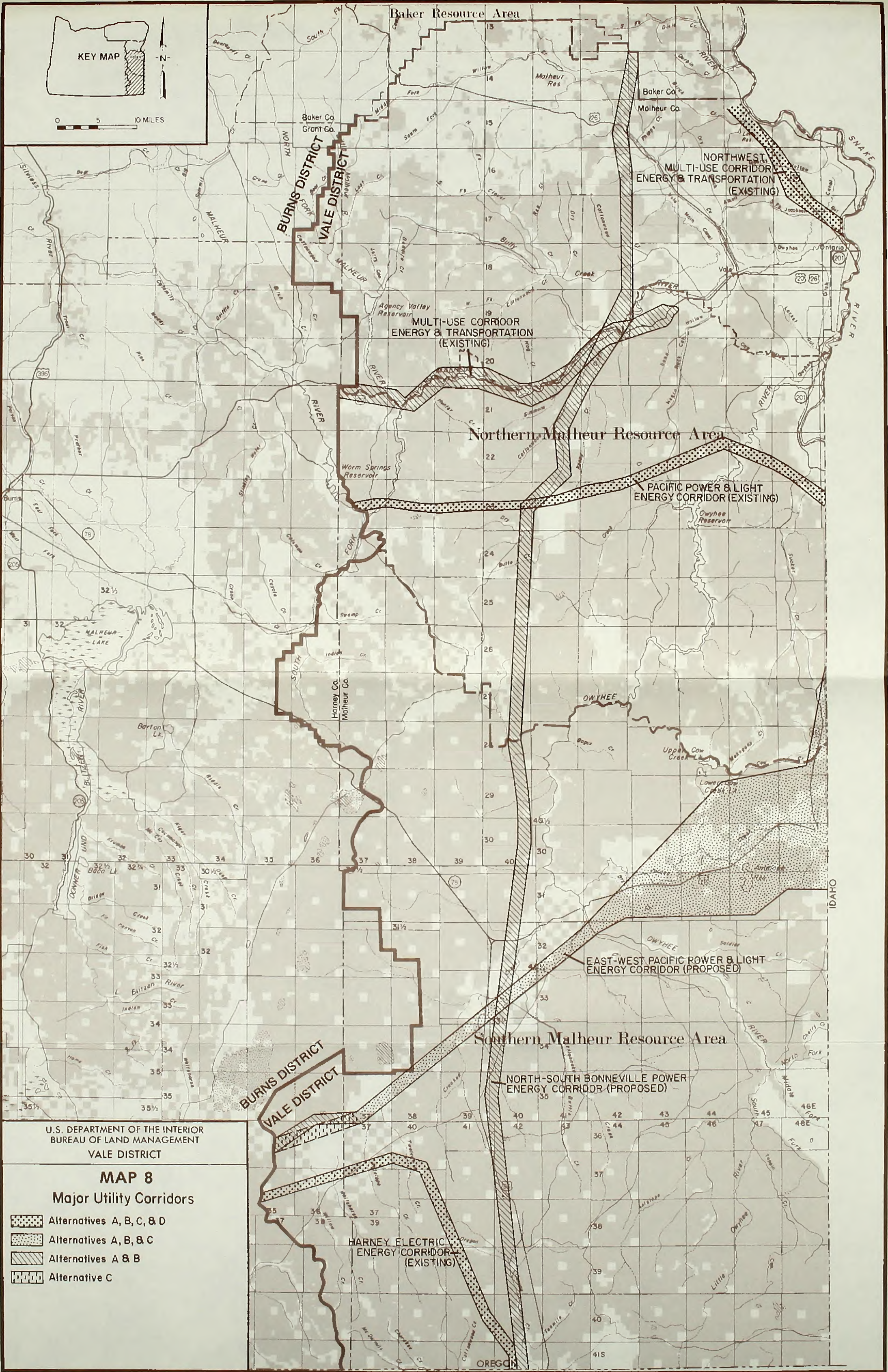
## **FIRE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM**

Fire is a natural factor in the development of Eastern Oregon range ecosystems. Attempts to exclude fire have frequently altered the vegetation to a less favorable livestock range condition. With proper management, burns are capable of releasing a more palatable and available forage. Fires often have some negative impacts, particularly if adverse runoff conditions occur. There are a number of wildlife species adversely impacted by fire.

The BLM is concerned about two basic types of fire: wildfire and prescribed fire. All four land use alternatives place emphasis on wildfire control. The degree of fire suppression would depend on the priority of the resource values threatened, finances, equipment and personnel. All four alternatives introduce prescribed fires into the management system, but the method and frequency of use would depend on the management goal of each alternative.

The Bureau of Land Management's policy regarding wildfires on or threatening the public land is to take aggressive action with sufficient force to bring about containment during the first burning period. In recent years, however, through the planning system it has become apparent that many fires occur in areas of low resource value and other fires occur in fire fuel types which are difficult to control. As a result land managers are preparing, in advance, plans which detail fire suppression methods to be implemented within specific areas. By doing this, reduced fire suppression costs and workload can be expected and the natural role of fire in the environment is allowed to take place.







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# **FACTORS OR CRITERIA TO BE USED IN THE SELECTION OF A PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE**

Decision criteria are measures for evaluating alternatives and selecting, or developing, a composite preferred land use allocation alternative. The preferred alternative would be the alternative which best meets national guidance and best satisfies the following decision criteria:

## **Grazing**

Meets the requirements of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), Public Rangelands Improvement Act, Taylor Grazing Act and the long-term objective of stabilizing the livestock industry and producing a sustained level of livestock forage to meet regional and national needs.

## **Wilderness**

Preserves those areas determined through the multiple use planning process and public involvement that wilderness is the most appropriate use of the land and resources.

## **Wildlife and Fish**

Protects, improves or develops fish spawning, rearing and migration habitat.

Protects important wildlife habitat offering food and shelter during all seasons of the year.

## **Minerals and Lands**

Allows exploration and development of mineral and energy resources while protecting other significant resource values.

Allows adequate land allocations for communication sites, access development and designation of right-of-way corridors while protecting other significant resource values.

Provides land exchanges and sales which best serve public interests.

## **Recreation and Visual Resources**

Meets the demands for developed and dispersed recreation opportunities identified in the Planning Area Analysis.

Provides for maintaining the visual quality of the landscape in areas of high sensitivity.

## **Cultural and Botanical Resources**

Protects or enhances habitat of threatened, endangered or sensitive plant species.

Provides for scientific and educational study through such programs as Research Natural Areas and Areas of Critical Environmental Concern.

Protects cultural resources in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

## **Wild Horses**

Protects wild horses in accordance with the Wild Horse and Burro Act.

## **Soils**

Maximize soil water infiltration. This occurs when erosion and runoff is reduced, thus allowing maximum vegetative production.

## **Water**

Contribute to the improvement or maintenance of water of sufficient quality and quantity for the beneficial uses in that stream. Although there is not a high potential for increasing water yield, our management action can affect timing of the yield, particularly by extending the season of flow as a result of improved riparian conditions.

## **Socio-Economic Conditions**

Maintains or expands the total level of local employment and personal earnings which are dependent on raw materials, recreation and other use opportunities available on lands administered by the District.

Maintains or expands the contributions of the District's programs to the local public revenues.

## **Consistency with State, local and other federal natural resource plans, programs and policies.**

Demonstrates consistency with State planning goals (Land Conservation and Development Commission), local comprehensive plans, and officially approved local resource related plans, programs and policies.

Demonstrates consistency with other federal agencies' officially approved resource related plans, programs and policies (provides coordinated approaches to regional issues and projects or proposals crossing administrative lines).

(Note: The comment sheet enclosed in this brochure has been formulated to provide opportunity for written comments on these factors to be used in the selection of a preferred alternative.)



# GLOSSARY

**Allotment Management Plans (AMP)** - an intensive livestock grazing management plan dealing with a specific unit of rangeland, based on multiple-use resource management objectives. The AMP considers livestock grazing in relation to the renewable resources - watershed, vegetation and wildlife. An AMP establishes the season of use, the number of livestock to be permitted on the range, and the range improvements needed.

**Animal Unit Month (AUM)** - The amount of forage consumed by one mature cow, and a calf under six months, for one month. The amount of forage consumed by five sheep, five deer, six bighorn, or seven antelope for one month is considered equal to one cow AUM. A horse requires approximately one "cow AUMs" per month.

**Archaeological Resources** - All evidence (including sites, artifacts and environmental data) which can be used to reconstruct the activities and customs of past peoples.

**Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)** - An area designated for special management to protect unique resource values; including wildlife, botanical and scenic values.

**Big-Game Animals** - Limited to mule deer, antelope and bighorn sheep in the Resource Areas.

**Cell Need** - A plant community or habitat that needs to be represented in the State natural areas program.

**Characteristic Landscape** - The land pattern which is distinctive or typical of an area.

**Commodity Resources** - Goods or products of economic use or value, such as livestock forage, minerals, lands or rights-of-way, or forage for big game. Although there may be a social or dollar value to visual resource quality or pure clean water, they are not normally considered commodities unless we can attach an economic value to them.

**Cultural Resources** - Include archaeological and historic resources.

**Diversity** - A measure of the variety of species and habitats in an area that take into account the relative abundance of each species or habitat.

**Endangered Species** - Plant or animal which is in danger of extinction through-out all or a significant part of its range.

**Environmental Education Areas** - Areas suitable for the study of plants and animals in their natural environments.

**Environmental Impact** - The positive or negative effect of any action upon a given area or resource.

**Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)** - A formal document that considers significant environmental impacts expected from implementation of federal actions.

**Forage** - Vegetation used for food by wildlife, domestic livestock, and wild horses.

**Habitat** - Type of environment in which certain plants or animals are found.

**Herd Area** - The full geographic area identified as having been used by a herd as its habitat in December 15, 1971.

**Herd Management Area (HMA)** - A herd area identified in an approved Resource Management Plan where wild horses will be maintained and managed.

**Historic Resource** - All evidences of human activity that date from historic (i.e., recorded history) periods. These resources include documentary data, sites, artifacts, environmental data, and locations where documented historical events took place.

**Implement** - To execute or accomplish goals or plans.

**Land-Use Planning** - The process of categorizing land units for various kinds and intensities of use and management. Plans are based on public demand, land use capability, cost/benefit analyses, public welfare, sociological considerations and specifications or constraints of applicable law and bureau policy.

**Management Facilities** - Projects established and used to achieve desired goals and objectives on public lands.

**Livestock Grazing Preference** - the total number of AUMs of livestock grazing on public lands attached to a base property controlled by a permittee or lessee.

**Livestock Active Grazing preference** - all or part of the grazing preference that is presently allocated for use.

**Livestock Suspended Grazing Preference** - that portion of grazing preference which has been suspended and for which is available and allocated for livestock grazing use on a sustained yield basis.

**Management Framework Plan (MFP)** - Land use plan for public lands which provides a set of goals, objectives, and constraints for a specific planning area to guide the development of detailed plans for the management of each resource. There are three stages of the MFP-process:



**Multiple Use** - Management of the public lands and their various resource values to best meet the present and future needs of the American people.

**Planning Area Analysis (PAA)** - A documentation of the existence and significance of economic, social, infrastructure, institutional, and environmental values, and the establishment of economic demand projections, within a planning area.

**Planning Unit** - A geographic area within a BLM District used for assembling resource inventory data.

**Plant Community** - A group of plants that occur together.

**Prescribed Fire** - A planned burning of land under favorable conditions which would improve the vegetative resources.

**Public Lands** - Any land and interest in land owned by the United States Government and administered by the Secretary of the Interior through the Bureau of Land Management. May include public domain or acquired lands in any combination.

**Raptors** - Bird species which have adapted to seize prey (i.e., eagles, hawks, etc.)

**Research Natural Area (RNA)** - An area preserved in its natural condition for scientific and educational purposes.

**Resource Area** - Geographic area that contains one or more planning units.

**Riparian Habitat** - Terrestrial sites influenced by perennial and intermittent waters which in combination with the water table level, soils and vegetation create a microclimate apart from that which exists on the upland terrestrial sites. These areas are found adjacent to rivers, streams, lakes, reservoirs, ponds, marches, seeps, spring bogs and wet meadows.

**Sensitive Species** - Plant or animal species that is proposed or being reviewed for official listing as threatened and endangered.

**Threatened Species** - A plant or animal which is likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

**Topography** - The relief feature or surface configuration of a geographic area.

**Unit Resource Analysis (URA)** - A BLM planning document which contains a comprehensive inventory and analysis of the resources within a specified geographic area (planning unit) and an analysis of their potential for development.

**Vernal Pond** - A pond which dries up seasonally.

**Visitor Day** - Twelve hours of recreational use by one or more persons.

**Visual Resource Management (VRM)** - Scenic quality evaluation and management classification system. Each VRM class prescribes certain limits on the amount of disturbance allowed in an area. Part of the recreation program.

**Water Quality** - The nature or grade of water.

**Watershed** - An area which ultimately drains into a particular waterbody or watercourse.

**Wetlands** - Aquatic areas such as marshes, swamps and wet areas which are crucial wildlife habitats.

**Wilderness Study Area (WSA)** - An area inventoried and determined to be wilderness in character, having few human developments and providing opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation.







**Comments on Southern and Northern Malheur Planning Units  
Proposed Land Use Alternatives and Alternatives and Issues for the Southern Malheur Grazing Management Environmental Impact Statement**

All comments should be postmarked by October 18, 1982 in order to receive timely consideration in our development of a preferred alternative and scoping of the Southern Malheur Grazing Management Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). If you want to receive a copy of the draft Southern Malheur Grazing Management EIS, you should check the following box and return this form with any comments.

☐

**1. DECISION FACTORS OR CRITERIA:** Please review the factors or criteria to be used in the selection of a preferred alternative and suggest any additions, improvements or priority order.

**2. PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE:** One of the proposed alternatives we have presented, or a modified version of one, may satisfy the decision factors you consider important. You may prefer a new alternative constructed from elements or combinations of these alternatives. Please indicate your preference for resource allocations and the reasons for your choice. Give a geographic (i.e., Saddle Butte, Whitehorse Creek) location, if applicable.

**3. OTHER ALTERNATIVES:** The Southern Malheur Grazing Management EIS will have alternatives in addition to the Area Managers preferred alternative. What other alternatives should be addressed in the EIS? Should these alternatives be composed of the grazing related elements of the four proposed alternatives or should there be additional alternatives?

**4. EIS ISSUES:** In addition to the above alternatives, there may be special issues or areas of concern to you. Please identify these so that the EIS can address all relevant issues. Keep in mind that the issues should be able to be resolved by the BLM through changes in the allocation of forage or intensity of livestock management.

**OTHER COMMENTS:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Representing: \_\_\_\_\_



2 OTHER ATTACHED: The following information is provided for your information. It is not intended to be a substitute for the information provided in the main body of the report.

Comments on Section and Section Number  
Planning Unit  
Inventory and Use Management  
Inventory and Use Management  
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